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**MITHILA
UNDER THE KARNATAS**



Mithila Under the Karnatas

(C. 1097—1325 A.D.)

C.P.N. SINHA

*(Post-Graduate Department of History,
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Mithila under the Karnatas (c. 1097-1325 A.D.)

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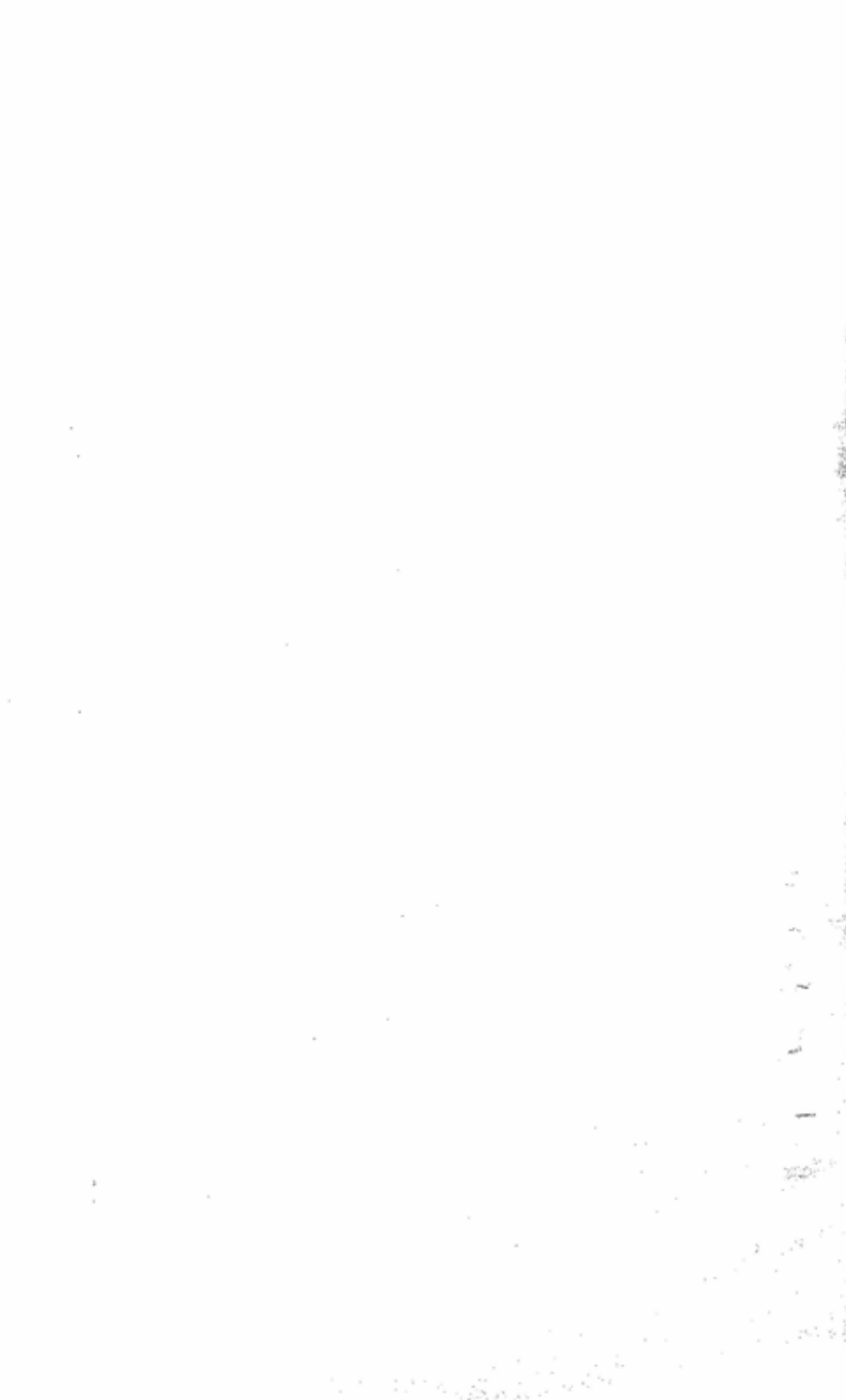
DEDICATED
to
PRINCIPAL RADHA KRISHNA CHAUDHARY
who
introduced me to the mystery and glory
of
MITHILA



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Preface

Mithila is a land steeped in myth, song, tradition and history. The outer facade of modern industrial life is the same everywhere. But a sensitive analyst of history shifts the scum of immediate reality to look beneath the surface. Many records, relics, stone-tablets bear those indelible etchings of time which suggest that Mithila was the seat of learning, civilization, chivalry and diplomacy. It is one of the ironies of history that Mithila, which once saw abundant growth of classical learning, poetics, culture and political thinking, should now sink into such misery and neglect. The digests and writings of Chandeswara and Vidyapati have the depth, range and richness of the immortal *Arthasastra* of Kautilya. It is a pity that very little has been done so far to tear away the cobweb of time that lies so thick on the face of many-splendoured Mithila.

From time to time the events of great importance involving memorable convulsions of history, many states and kings cast their shadows on Mithila. Such events not only throw light on the trials and triumphs of Mithila but also light up those hidden links that connected it with other states. In other words, the history of Mithila is a fragment of the total history of India. National history is nothing but a composite of the histories of regions comprising the nation. In the Indian context regional history assumes added significance as India has ever been a sub-continent, a vast geographical entity teeming with a variety of cultures, religions and languages. Each fragment of this vast land mass has fostered a unique culture of its own. By placing the focus in a fragment one can elicit facts that transcend a fragmentary of local significance. Regional

history in India is a far more complex and absorbing subject than in any other country of the world because often a particular region has been subject to strange pressures of time which in turn have given a certain distinct identity to it. The myth of 'unity in diversity' is nothing but a reiteration of the fact that Indian history is more like a kaleidoscope than an organic entity. In a kaleidoscope multi-coloured glass-strips so combine as to constitute a beautiful colour-band. Mithila is a colourful glass-strip in the kaleidoscope of India's national history.

Personal fascination for the regional history, specially for the spirit and diversity of the place to which I belong, played an important part in the choice of a subject like this. Besides, India's ancient history has always exercised an irresistible influence on me. The desire to study Mithila by placing her in the dim perspective of ancient time has also been conditioned by the fertilizing influence of Professor Ram Sharan Sharma's brilliant and illuminating lectures on different aspects of Indian history and culture. It is really exciting to dig into the roots of the present day habits, numerous customs and variegated caste-system, and in the process, to arrive at a point in the remote past where the seeds were sown. The Karnatas were able rulers who exercised a shaping influence on the life and institutions of Mithila. The folk-lore, traditions and regional character of Mithila bear the impress of the brave, imaginative and diplomatic Karnatas. The Karnatas are gone but the mould in which they cast a whole region of north eastern India still persists. This eventful period in the history of Mithila has engaged the attention of many renowned historians who have explored it from various angles. The result is a formidable and impressive bulk of scholarship. Without undermining the importance of the past studies which are essentially of a pioneering nature, I most humbly feel that these researches hardly describe in detail the history of the Karnatas, which is the first known history of the land. Only a few books and brochures on the history of Mithila have come out : S.N. Singh's *History of Tirhut* is merely a survey; Upendra Thakur's *History of Mithila* only touches upon some aspects of a rich and complex subject; there are only rudimentary references about the period in R.K.

Chaudhary's *History of Bihar* and the thesis of Hasan Nisat Ansari deals mainly with history of the Turko-Afghan period in Bihar.

An inquisitive student of history is faced with a wealth of material which scarcely presents a comprehensive and coherent account of the Karnatas. The available researches on the subject give only the tip of the iceberg. Hence it has been my burden and pleasure to explore the great body of the subject still submerged in the dark waters of vague speculation. There is a conspicuous lack of sufficient numismatic and epigraphic evidence which has led to an incomplete thinking regarding the chronology of the period. Besides, the revised opinions of some eminent scholars like D.R. Regmi, *History of Medieval Nepal*, 1965 make it imperative to attempt a thorough reassessment of the subject. Naturally, the temptation to explore in depth that eventful period of the history of Mithila became an irresistible urge with me. In my fascinating but arduous job I have been guided by the desire to restore coherence, authenticity and completeness to a vague and incomplete area of research. Care has also been taken to update and systematise the scholarship available on the subject. My work presents a systematic analysis, discussion and classification of the subject under study in ten chapters : the first two chapters are of a rather general nature not merely because these serve as a prelude to more penetrating discussion in the chapters that follow but also because for these I had to depend largely on secondary sources. The remaining chapters derive their logic and bias, if any, from my own analyses and conclusions. I had occasions to differ on many points from my illustrious predecessors in the field. But differences are not necessarily judgments; these neither reject nor determine quality. My points of difference emerge from a fresh analysis of the available data in light of recent researches. These have also been conditioned by my own findings and assessment. In a political history like this one has to tread cautiously shifting and analysing the available facts and opinions and rearranging the same into a new pattern. The whole history of Karnatas is still not without a thin haze of mystery and uncertainty about it. The paucity of definitive source material, dates on speculation

or culled from secondary sources, lack of known and established facts, compel the researcher not only to tap all important and unimportant sources but also to strain his own faculties to present an authentic and acceptable picture. This precisely has been my burden in weaving a coherent tale of the fabulous Karnatas of Mithila whose rule is an important landmark in the history of north-eastern India.

Each chapter of the present work embodies an aspect of my findings into this field. After giving a rudimentary account of the name, geography and the sources of the history of Mithila in chapter I, I have devoted chapter II to a survey of the history of Mithila down to A.D. 1097. A.D. 1097 denotes the advent of the Karnatas, Nanyadeva being the founder of the glorious line. Chapter III enlarges upon the subject by trying to streamline and authenticate the conflicting available material regarding the origin of the Karnatas. To distil the seemingly plausible account from various theories concerning origin of Karnatas is the main burden of this chapter.

Chapter IV has been solely devoted to an enumeration and evaluation of the career and achievements of Nanyadeva, the founder of the Karnata dynasty. The next chapter follows the line of descent and as such converges on an analysis of the lives and attainments of Malladeva, the forgotten king of Mithila and Gangadeva, the traditional successor of Nanyadeva. This chapter establishes the true identity of Gangadeva and shows that Gangadeva of Tirabhukti was the same Gangeyadeva of Mithila. Still pursuing the trail of the same dynasty, chapter VI examines the political history of Mithila by the successive Karnata rulers namely, Narasimhadeva, Ramasimhadeva and Saktisimhadeva. Saktisimhadeva is also known as Sakrasimhadeva and the problem of succession after him is still a serious handicap to modern researcher on Mithila. Chapter VII dwells exclusively on the career and achievements of Harisimhadeva, the last great ruler of Mithila. It is an assessment rather than restatement of facts concerning the last of the Karnata giants. The eighth chapter hints at the pressures which eventually undermined the Karnata dominance. In other words, it traces the course of the gradual expansion of the Muslim authority in Mithila and Bihar upto A.D. 1325. I have

made use of the entire bulk of material available on this phase of Mithila's history. In chapter IX we find the Karnata dynasty coursing down the slope of decline. Of course, any definitive statement on the subject is hazardous as the controversy regarding the eclipse that enveloped the Karnatas is still open to fresh interpretation and is hence inconclusive.

Chapter X analyses at length the polity and society of Mithila under Karnatas with special emphasis on the administrative, social, economic and cultural aspects under review. The epilogue briefly introduces the reader to the wealth of knowledge and research available on the subject, evaluates the same in the light of the latest findings and instead of adopting an arrogant tone of finality it closes with a suggestion that the field is still open to further research.

The exhaustive bibliography at the end, though a part of the usual outfit of every research work, has been prepared with special care in order that the student and scholar may find in it definite guideposts along the road to ancient and early medieval Mithila.

In course of my study I had to visit different libraries and mention may be made of the National Library, Calcutta and Durbar Library, Kathmandu, Nepal and I am thankful to the members of the staff of these libraries for extending all possible help to me.

I could not have ventured to take up a systematic study of the history of the Karnatas of Mithila without able guidance and inspiration. Principal R.K. Chaudhary showed me the way and virtually led me through a thick mass of information, often hazy and confusing, to my destination. To him I owe my initiation into the field of research work. Whenever I faced an impasse in course of study, he opened up new avenues and whenever my steps faltered, his strong hands came to my aid. My gratitude to him is too deep for words.

I cannot afford to forget Shri Parkeshwar Nath Sinha, Reader in Political Science, Bhagalpur University, Bhagalpur who urged me to take up this research. I offer my grateful thanks to him.

I wish to place on record my deep sense of gratitude to Dr. S.P. Sinha, M.Sc., Ph.D. (Pat.), Ph.D. (Lond.), D.L.C., Deputy

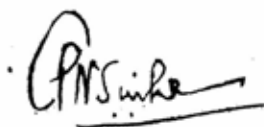
Chairman, Intr-University Board, Bihar, who, though not related to my discipline, has been an inexhaustible source of encouragement and help to me. To Shri S.N. Singh, the former Principal of G.D. College, Begusarai, I owe a special debt of obligation for his ever inspiring influence on the entire course of my work.

My grateful thanks are due to my friend Dr. A.K. Mishra Dept. of English, T.N.B. College, Bhagalpur for the strenuous task of going through the manuscript and suggesting various improvements therein. I shall be failing in my duty if I do not thank the authorities of the Bhagalpur University for their grant of a subsidy to meet a part of the cost of publication.

My thanks are also due to Shri A.K. Singh, Department of History, Patna University, Patna and my younger brother, Shri R.P.N. Sinha, Department of Economics, B.M.D. College Dayalpur, Vaisali for their, co-operation and help. I sincerely acknowledge the encouragement, co-operation and ungrudging help of my colleagues, friends and well-wishers.

My special thanks are due to Shri Gopal Prasad Ambasta for preparing the typescript with labour and care. I express my gratitude to Shri R.B. Singh, Janaki Prakashan, Patna, for taking personal interest in the timely publication of the book.

Deepawali, 1978,
BHAGALPUR.



ABBREVIATIONS

<i>ABORI</i>	Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Poona.
<i>AIE</i>	Ancient Indian Education By. R.K. Mukherjee.
<i>ASB</i>	Asiatic Society of Bengal.
<i>ASI</i>	Archaeological Survey of India.
<i>ASR</i>	Archaeological Survey Report.
<i>AMMK</i>	Aryamanjusrimulakalpa.
<i>BI</i>	Banglar Itihasa By R. D. Banerjee.
<i>BI</i>	Bibliotheca Indica.
<i>BMI</i>	Mithila Ka Bhasamaya Itihasa By Mukunda Jha Baksi.
<i>BRIGGS</i>	Rise of Mohammadan power in India (Ferishta), Lucknow, 1905.
<i>CASR</i>	Cunningham's Archaeological Survey Report.
<i>CHB</i>	History of Bihar By R. K. Chaudhary.
<i>CIB</i>	Select Inscriptions of Bihar By R. K. Chaudhary.
<i>CHN</i>	Chronology and History of Nepal By K. P. Jayaswal.
<i>CII</i>	Catalogous Inscriptionum Indicarum.
<i>CPMDN</i>	Catalogue of the Palm-leaf-manuscripts in the Durbar Library, Nepal. (Also Nepal Notices or Nepal Catalogue.
<i>CR</i>	Calcutta Review.
<i>CS</i>	Current Studies, Patna.

<i>DG</i>	Darbhanga District Gazetteer.
<i>DHNI</i>	Dynastic History of Northern India By H. C. Ray.
<i>DKM</i>	Decline of the Kingdom of Magadha By B. P. Sinha.
<i>ED</i>	History of India in VIII Volumes By Elliot and Dowson.
<i>EHNI</i>	Early History of North India By S. Chattopadhyaya.
<i>EI</i>	Epigraphia Indica.
<i>EHI</i>	Early History of India By. V. K. Smith.
<i>GOS</i>	Gaekwad Oriental Series.
<i>GDCH</i>	G. D. College Bulletin Series Nos. I to IV.
<i>HAIB</i>	History and Aspects of the Inscription of Bengal—By B. C. Sen.
<i>HCIP</i>	History and Culture of the Indian People (Edited By R. C. Mazumdar and A. D. Pusalkar.
<i>HC</i>	Harsacharita By Banabhatta.
<i>HML</i>	History of Maithili Literature By Jaikanta Misra.
<i>HNEI</i>	History of North Eastern India By R. G. Basak.
<i>IAQR</i>	Imperial Asiatic Quarterly Review.
<i>IA</i>	Indian Antiquary.
<i>IB</i>	Inscriptions of Bengal.
<i>IC</i>	Indian Culture.
<i>IHI</i>	Imperial History of India By K. P. Jayaswal and Rahula Sankrityayana.
<i>HIQ</i>	Indian Historical Quarterly.
<i>IGI</i>	Imperial Gazetteer of India.
<i>IOM</i>	India Office Manuscripts.
<i>IOC</i>	India Office Catalogue.
<i>JA</i>	Journale Asiatique.
<i>JAHRS</i>	Journal of the Andhra Historical Research Society.

<i>JASB</i>	Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal.
<i>JASBL</i>	Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal (Letters).
<i>JASB (NS)</i>	Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal (New Series).
<i>JBBRAS</i>	Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society.
<i>JBORS</i>	Journal of the Bihar (and Orissa) Research Society.
<i>JDL</i>	Journal of the Department of Letters.
<i>JIH</i>	Journal of Indian History.
<i>JNSI</i>	Journal of the Numismatic Society of India.
<i>JGRI</i>	Journal of the Ganganath Jha Research Institute.
<i>JOI</i>	Journal of the Oriental Institute.
<i>JOT</i>	Journal of the Oriental Thought.
<i>JKAS</i>	Journal of the Kamarupa Anusandhan Samiti.
<i>JMOS</i>	Journal of Manchester Oriental Society.
<i>JRAS</i>	Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland.
<i>KIRTILATA</i>	By Vidyapati.
<i>LS</i>	Laksmāna Samvata.
<i>NEPAL</i>	By Sylvan Levi.
<i>LSI</i>	Linguistic Survey of India By G. A. Grierson.
<i>MASB</i>	Memoirs of the Asiatic Society of Bengal.
<i>MASI</i>	Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India.
<i>MB</i>	History of Bengal--Volume-I Ed. By R.C. Mazumdar.
<i>MBH</i>	Mahabharata.
<i>MD</i>	Mithila Darpana By Ras Bihari Das.

<i>MDG</i>	Muzaffarpur District Gazetteer (Old Edn.).
<i>MDG</i>	Motihari District Gazetteer (Old Edn.).
<i>MMC</i>	Mithila Manuscript Catalogue Ed. By K. P. Jayaswal and A. Banerjee Sastri.
<i>MITHILA</i>	Maithili Weekly, Darbhanga
<i>MMM</i>	Mithilanka of Mithila Mihir (Darbhanga-1935-36).
<i>MD</i>	Mithila Darpana, Published from Calcutta.
<i>MTV</i>	Mithila Tatva Vimarsa By Parmeswara Jha.
<i>MM</i>	Mithila Mihir (New Series) Patna.
<i>MARGA</i>	All Volumes, Edited by Mulkaraja Anand.
<i>MSS</i>	Manuscripts.
<i>PAIOC</i>	Proceedings of the All India Oriental Congress.
<i>PETECH</i>	Medieval History of Nepal By Luciano Petech.
<i>PB</i>	Palas of Bengal By R. D. Banerjee.
<i>PIHC</i>	Proceedings of the Indian History Congress.
<i>PHAI</i>	Political History of Ancient India By H. C. Rai Choudhury.
<i>PP</i>	Purusapariksa By Vidyapati.
<i>PPM</i>	Prakritapaingalama.
<i>PUJ</i>	Patna University Journal.
<i>QJAHS</i>	Quarterly Journal of the Andhra Historical Research Society.
<i>QJMS</i>	Quarterly Journal of the Mythical Society.
<i>RR</i>	Rajniti Ratnakara.
<i>RC</i>	Ramacharita By Sandhyakara Nandi.
<i>RIYAZ</i>	Riyaz-us-Salatin.
<i>SHB</i>	History of Bengal—Vol. II Ed. By Jadunath Sarkar.

<i>ST</i>	Story of Tirhut By Shyam Narain Singh.
<i>SII</i>	South Indian Inscriptions.
<i>TK</i>	History of Kanauj By R. S. Tripathi.
<i>TM</i>	History of Mithila By Upendra Thakur.
<i>TN</i>	Tabaquat-e-Nasiri.
<i>VK</i>	Vamsavali in possession of Kaiser San. shera Jang Bahadur Rana.
<i>VR</i>	Varnana Ratnakara.
<i>VT</i>	Vamsavali in possession of Tucci
<i>VAIDEHI</i>	Monthly Maithili Journal Darbhanga
<i>VBD</i>	Vamsavali of Cecil Bendall.
<i>CHAMPARAN</i>	West Champaran and East Champaran.
<i>DARBHANGA</i>	Madhubani, Darbhanga and Samastipur
<i>MUZAFFARPUR</i>	Vaisali, Muzaffarpur and Sitamarhi.



Introduction and the sources

INTRODUCTION

Though once noted for a high degree of civilization and as a centre of culture and philosophy, the history of Mithila has not yet received the attention of scholars it deserves. Stray works or attempts of general historical nature simply refer to some aspects of the history and culture of Mithila and even the latest account of a thesis of the Patna University entitled *Bihar During the Turko-Afghan Period* by Hasan Nisat Ansari simply furnishes a general outline and the history of Mithila does not find a proportionate space. The earlier pioneer attempts on the subject by Manmohan Chakravarty, K.P. Jayaswal, S.N. Singh, R.C. Mazumdar, G.A. Grierson, Parmeswara Jha, Ras Bihari Das, R.K. Choudhury, U. Thakur, J.K. Misra and others are no doubt valuable contribution but they hardly give us any coherent and connected history of the land which was once a renowned seat of civilization and learning. *History of Bihar* by R.K. Choudhury and *Bihar through the Ages* edited by R.R. Diwakar contain only sketchy accounts of the history of Mithila. Even *History of Mithila* (Circa 3000 B.C. to 1556 A.D.) by Upendra

Thakur, though a pioneer work, is the second systematic attempt to present the history of Mithila on scientific lines. The credit of producing the first monograph on almost scientific lines entitled *History of Tirhut* goes to S.N. Singh. Although his work is full of limitations, yet the attempt of a person belonging to Bihar Civil Service is really praise-worthy. The canvas of U. Thakur is so wide that it has not been possible for the author, in spite of his best intentions, to present a coherent picture of the history and culture of the people of Mithila. The allotment of pages to different chapters will convince the readers of my contention. He has not been able to present the social, economic and cultural history even in outline of the period between 326 B.C. to 1097 A.D. These relevant aspects of the period between 1097 A.D. and 1526 A.D. have been discussed in about forty-five pages. The difficulty is natural as he has tried to cover a very lengthy period of about four thousand and five hundred years in about four hundred and fifty pages. This account is based mainly on traditional sources. Keeping in view the importance of the history of Mithila under the Karnatas, I have taken up a shorter period of about two hundred and twenty-eight years i.e. Circa 1097 to 1325 A.D. The Karnatas of Mithila played an important part in the history of North-Eastern India for a considerable period and as such they deserve to be treated in a separate monograph, like the Palas and the Senas of Bengal, the Gahadawalas of Kanauj and others. The Karnatas brought Mithila on the map of India as an independent State and hence they deserve to be treated at par with other contemporary dynasties. Undoubtedly the dawn of Nanyadeva on the political horizon of north-eastern India and the subsequent establishment of the Karnata dynasty in Mithila is an event of immense historical significance. The achievements of the dynasty in the realm of politics and administration, art and learning, society and culture and other allied branches are extremely attractive and very tempting from the point of view of research. It is with this end in view that I have taken up this study.

LAND AND NAME OF MITHILA

Mithila is known as Videha, Tirabhukti and Tirbut etc. According to *The Imperial Gazetteer of India* (Volume, VIII—page 187) "Mithila is the name for the tract lying between 25°28' and 26°52' N. latitude and between 84°56' and 86°46' E. longitude. Mithila is bounded on the north by the Himalayas, in the south by the Ganga, in the west by the Gandaki and on the east by the Kosi. According to the *Saktisangamatantra*, Videha or Tirabhukti spread from the banks of Gandaki to the forests of Champa. According to D.C. Sircar, the Gandakitira formed the southern boundary, while modern district of Champaran was the northern boundary of Tirhut. The origin of the name of Videha and Mithila is purely mythical. The *Visnupurana* provides the following detail of the origin of Mithila : Nimi, the son of Ikshvaku instituted a sacrifice and asked Vasistha to preside. Vasistha replied that he had already been engaged by Lord Indra in a sacrifice. Nimi made no answer and Vasistha thought that he had agreed and went away. Nimi employed Gotam along with other risis and started his sacrifice. Vasistha came in all haste to Nimi but finding Gotam and other risis employed, cursed Nimi that he should thenceforth cease to exist in a corporal form. Nimi cursed Vasistha in turn and both abandoned their human bodies. After Nimi's death the risis agitated his body and a boy was produced and was named *Mithi*—a product of churning.

Mithi succeeded his father and his country came to be known as Mithila. Mithi was self-born and so his successors came to be known as Janaka (meaning self-born) According to Mithilakhanda of the *Brihadvisnupurana*, Videha means one whose body is gone. According to Panini, Mithila is the town where enemies are crushed. The country is said to have derived its name from King Videgha Mathav who came from the banks of the Saraswati. According to the *Satapathabrahmana* Agni-vaisvanara went burning along the earth from the Saraswati towards the east followed by Mathav and his priest Gotama Rahugana until he came to the river Sadanira (Gandak). At

that time land to the east was marshy and uncultivated. After the arrival of Mathav it was made cultivable with the help of fire god Agni. Besides Mithila, Videha is also known as Tirabhukti, Tapobhumi, Sambhavi, Suvarnakanana, Mantili, Vaijayanti, Janakpura, etc. There were as many as twelve names of Mithila.¹ The Prakrita literature describes Mithila as one of the most important names of Videha. Tirabhukti is a later name for Mithila. It is mentioned in the *Trikhandasasa* (p. 50) of Purusottamadeva (c twelfth century A.D.). It has been described as a place situated along the banks of three big rivers—Ganga, Gandaki and Kosi.

It is said that Tirabhukti is made of two words—Tira and Bhukti—Tira indicating bordering on the river and Bhukti indicating a province. According to Cunningham, Tirabhukti lay in the valleys of the little Gandak and Bagmati rivers. The Vaisali excavations led to the discovery of a large number of seals which brought to light the existence of Tira which was possibly the locality from which the name Tirabhukti was derived. The inscription "Tirabnuktau Vaisalitara" and miniature paintings of two palm-leaf manuscripts confirm the fact that by twelfth century A.D. the area had come to be known as Tirabhukti. Vamana in his *Linganusasana* has also mentioned Tirabhukti and on this basis we can say that Tirabhukti had become well-known by the eighth century A.D. According to the Mithila-tradition Tirabhukti means the land in which three great sacrificial *homas* were performed—(i) the birth of Sita in or near Sitamarhi (ii) the second at Dhanukha at the foot of the Himalayas when the great celestial bow of Lord Siva at Dhanukha was broken by Rama (iii) the third on the occasion of the marriage of Sita.² Thus, it came to be known as Tribhukti which in course of time became Tirabhukti.

Even modern Tirhut is said to be a corruption of Trihutama i.e. the country of three sacrifices. In the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* Tirhut is said to be a corruption of Tirabhukti meaning river side country.

SOURCES

Unfortunately for us, we have neither a Thucydides nor a Herodotus, nor even a Bana or Kalhana or even the news and chronicle-writers for the purpose of our study. The sources for the study of the history of Mithila are meagre and it is very difficult to construct a scientific history of the period out of the fragmentary sources scattered here and there. Except the solitary account of Dharmaswami, the Tibetan traveller, we have no evidence of foreign travellers. The archaeological sources are missing not because Mithila is lacking in archaeological sites but because of the fact that the sites have not yet been explored and excavated. No coins or seals and inscriptions of note have been discovered and it is likely that most of the valuable source-materials by now must have been washed away by the floods and destroyed by fire, the two recurring events which annually take place in Mithila.

For the ancient period, we have a good deal of literary sources like the Vedas and the Upanisadas, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, works of Panini and Patanjali, the Buddhist and Jain literary sources and the different Puranas incidentally refer to the various aspects of the history and culture of Mithila.

Nothing tangible is known about the actual state of affairs and we have to be content with only stray references which are available regarding certain names and places. No systematic attempt has yet been made to piece together all those scattered materials and knowledge and give them a concrete shape.

We are hopelessly disappointed when we search for other sources—numismatic or epigraphic. Various manuscripts have been discovered from Nepal and they throw interesting side-lights on the history and culture of Mithila during the period under review. The Nepal Durbar Manuscript, various Vamsavalis, the Nepalese inscriptions, specially of the Malla-Karnata period, discovered, edited and published by persons like Rajendra Lal Mitra, Haraprasad Sastri, Egelling, Keith, K.P. Jayaswal, Bhagwanlal Indraji, Cecil Bendall, Tucci, L. Petech, D.R. Regmi, R.C. Mazumdar, S.K. Sarswati and others throw sufficient light on the history of Mithila and enable us to

reconstruct the history on almost scientific lines. The four volumes of Mithila-manuscripts, published so far, edited by A. Banerji, Sastri and K.P. Jayaswal, also help us in listing the names and dates of the rulers and scholars of Mithila during our period. Several manuscripts, preserved in the Asiatic Society of Bengal and other libraries of India also help us in determining the chronology of some of the mediaeval Maithil kings and personalities. Some of the important manuscripts having significant bearings on the history of the period are *Bhattika-vyatika* by Srinivasa, *Krityakalpataru* by Laksmidhara, *Lingavaratika* by Jaisimha, *Kavyaprakasaviveka* by Sridhara Thakur and *Chandogaparisista* by Narayana. The innumerable writings of late lamented George Abraham Grierson are very important sources for our study.

The inscriptions recently discovered from the district of Champaran, the Naulagarha inscription in Begusarai, the Bana-gaon copperplate, the Katra inscription a terracotta (Begusarai) dated L.S. 69, the Panchobha copperplate, the Andhratharhi inscription, the two inscription from Motihari the Bheet Bhagwanpur inscription of Malladeva, the Havidiha inscription and Maheswara inscription of Rukunuddin Kaikus are the few epigraphic materials available to us and very few of them are important in so far as the construction of the history of our period is concerned. The Bedibana inscription of the time of Muhammad-bin-Tughluq, another inscription of the time of Feroze Tughluq from the Saran region, the two copper coins (forced currency) of Muhammad-bin-Tughluq from Tughluqpura mint (Darbhanga) and the Motihari inscription of Nasrat Shah (Begusarai) are valuable evidence and deserve to be scientifically examined and studied. Mulla Taqia refers to the existence of some Muslim inscriptions in and around Darbhanga. The Deopara inscription of Vijayasena also throws some light on the history of Nanyadeva.

The *Yajastilaka* of Somadeva, *Ramcharita* of Sandhyakara Nandi, *Ballalacharita* *Sadhuktikarnamrita* of Sridharadasa, the *Vikramankadevacharita* of Bilhana, the *Linganusasana* of Vamana, the *Ratnakaras* of Chandeswara Thakur, the *Varnana-Ratnakara* of Jyotirishwara, the *Parijataharananataka* of Umapati, the *Prakritapaingalama* and the writings of Vidyapati specially his *Purusapariksa* are very important source-materials.

The *Prakritapaingalama*, in a way supplements and complements the *Purusapariksa* of Vidyapati. These two works are of immense significance in so far as the study of this period is concerned. Vidyapati's *Purusapariksa*, the *Prakritapaingalama*, the Muslim sources, the *Rambhamanjarinataka* and the epigraphic evidence of the period are all very important and they corroborate each other in so far as the historicity of a fact is concerned. In the *Prakritapaingalama*, there is an important information with regard to Chandeswara, the author of the *Rajaniti-Ratnakara*. The extensive powers wielded by Chandeswara is evident from the fact that he himself was the patron of a great poet Haribrahma who had composed verses in praise of his master. Haribrahma in his 'avahatta' poems refers to Chandeswara and describes him as a mighty minister of Harisimhadeva.

The tales narrated in the *Purusapariksa* of Vidyapati throw light on the history of the Karnata dynasty of Mithila. The Karnatas ruled in Mithila from 1097 to 1325 A.D. which is evident from Tale nos. 3, 4, 8, 11 and 22. Tale 3 gives us some information about Malladeva, "Hero Valorous", son of Nanyadeva, founder of the Karnata dynasty. This tale has been subjected to much controversy by the historians of eminence. Malladeva was associated with Jayachanda of Kanauj (1170—1193 A.D.) and the Chikkora a king. The Chikkoras belonged to the kingdom of Pithi and at one time played a very prominent part in the history of North-Eastern India. Probably it was represented by a district of Tirhut and was probably a buffer-state between Gauda and Kanyakubja. There was some sort of matrimonial alliance between the Gahadawalas and the kingdom of Pithi. The Pithi princess, Kumardevi, was the wife of Govindachanda. She was a Buddhist while Govindachanda was an Orthodox Hindu and this marriage shows that tension between the two sects had eased to some extent. This shows that relation between the two kingdoms was cordial. In the present tale, Jayachanda has been called the King of Kasi which is historically true. From this tale, we learn that Chikkora King had modest strength and had not the means to measure arms with so mighty a monarch as Jayachanda of Kasi. It thus appears that during the time of Jayachanda the Chikkoras were merely

feudal chieftains and were unable to pay a huge indemnity, if so demanded. Malladeva is said to have become the cause of conflict between these two kingdoms. Malladeva was a brave warrior and a fighter and was called "Pratimalla" or antagonist. He is addressed by Jayachanda as "the supreme scion of the Karnata race." The historicity of Malladeva yet remains to be verified.

Tale 4 has been subjected to various interpretations. According to this tale there reigned in Hastinapur a Moslem Sultan, who ruled the land from sea to sea. A Kafar Raja, unable to endure his tyranny, came thither with his entire army to attack him. The Sultan, on hearing of this approach, issued from the city escorted by the horses from Bulkh and Turkistan and many hundreds of riders and challenged him to combat. The Sultan was helped by the two young princes—Narasimhadeva of the Karnata race and Chaichika Deva, the Chauhan. Grierson has identified that Sultan with Muhammad-bin-Tughluq (C. 1325-1351 A.D.). According to the learned scholar, the Kafar Raja was probably Tarmashirin Khan of the Savage Mangols. He also accepts that Narasimhadeva was the grandson of Nanyadeva. Then in that case, he cannot be a contemporary of Muhammad-bin-Tughluq. Narasimhadeva ruled between 1188 and 1227 A.D. He observes—"When Ghiyasuddin, the father and predecessor of Muhammad-bin-Tughluq was returning from the conquest of Bengal in 1323 A.D., he passed from the area of Tirhut and took Narasimhadeva with him to Delhi. Who Chachika was I do not know." The learned scholar has made the confusion worst confounded by his above statement. His conclusions are doubtful. It is clear that in 1323 A.D. the last and the greatest king of the Karanata dynasty, Harisimhadeva, was ruling. Ghiyasuddin had to strike against him. Chakravarty's conclusions are the same and hence unreliable. It seems plausible to identify this Moslem Sultan with Shahabuddin Muhammad Ghori because this identification finds support in Mithila tradition which asserts that Narasimhadeva used to go to Kanauj with his uncle Malladeva and after the end of Jayachanda's reign he went to the Court of Shahabuddin Muhammad Ghori and fought for him. Narasimhadeva was a

contemporary of Muhammad Ghori. We should bear in mind that Vidyapati has simply used 'Muhammad' and not the full name. Such instances in history are not very rare. Further, we should note that he has given the history of the Karnatas in five tales and while doing so he has kept in view the chronological order. At least this much of chronological accuracy is expected of a scholar of his repute, whose ancestors had served in various capacities under the Karnatas of Mithila and about whose exploits he must have been fully aware. The question of the identification of Chachikadeva is also worth investigating. The Chauhana genealogy leads us to believe that Someswara Chauhana had two sons named Prithviraj and Chachikadeva. Prithviraj was slain by Muhammad Ghori in 1193 A.D. To me it seems almost certain that if Chachikadeva was the brother of Prithviraj, he must have been a contemporary of Muhammad Ghori. He might have joined his camp after the defeat of his brother. Chachikadeva is called "hero truthful" in this tale. It is not possible to identify this Kafar Raja unless further evidence is forthcoming. Hindus are also called Kafar by the Muslims and it is quite likely that it might refer to some sort of conflict with any Indian power of that period.

In tales 8, 11 and 22 we are told about Harasimhadeva, the last great king of the Karnata dynasty. In tale 8, we find the discussion about the ability of his minister, Vireswara and in tale 11 we are told about his relationship with the king of Devagiri. From tale 11 we learn that Ganeswara, well-versed in Samkhya School of Philosophy and skilled in the science of government, was one of his ministers. It appears that Harasimhadeva was a contemporary of Ramachandradeva of Devagiri. The two kings were on terms of correspondence. Just as the Maithili king was fortunate in having Ganeswara as his minister, similarly the king of Devagiri had Hemadri, a great law-giver, as his minister. It appears that these two kings entered into a treaty of friendship. But its authenticity remains to be verified. According to tale 22, Harasimhadeva has been described as the best judge of the "art of singing". Thus, the *Purusapariksa* of Vidyapati is a very important source and Vidyapati discusses the history of Mithila in a very systematic and chronological

order. He brings to light various aspects regarding the Karnata dynasty and important personalities of the age. But this aspect of Vidyapati's historical sense has not yet been critically examined and the *Purusapariksa* has not been subjected to critical and historical examination.³ Even the latest edition of *Purusapariksa* by Ramanath Jha is not critical and unbiased. Even his latest work on *Kirtilata* is not free from various errors and doubts.

The *Bayaz* of Mulla Taqia is a reliable piece of historical evidence in so far as our period is concerned. But its authenticity cannot be vouchsafed since it has passed through various hands and is available only in fragments. Many facts recorded here are not substantiated by contemporary Muslim sources and it appears that the persons handling the *Bayaz* have mixed some traditional elements with the real history. Any way, its importance cannot be minimised. But it is to be studied very carefully and scientifically. The *Basatin-ul-Uns* of Muhammad Sadr Ala Ahmad Hussain Dabir is another authentic account, rather the first hand eye witness account of the invasion of Mithila by Ghiyasuddin Tughluq. The account regarding the event is so sketchy that it is difficult to build up a full historical frame work. The name of the ruling monarch of Mithila is not mentioned. It has got to be supplemented by accounts of Ishami, Barni, Ferishta and others. The Muslim historical works like *Tabaqat-e-Nasiri*, *Tarikh-e-Ferozshahi*, *Futuh-us-Salatin* etc. give us information about the contemporary history of Mithila in a connected manner.

The traditional sources as preserved in the writings of Parmeswara Jha, Ras Behari Das, and in the Mithilanka of *Mithila Mihir* (1935-36 Darbhanga) are also very helpful. The Panjis of Mithila can be utilized in reconstructing the political and social history of the period. In view of their archaic writings, it has not been possible for the scholars to go deep into this important source of the History of Mithila, and this has been a sealed book for most of us. Even experienced Panjikaras of the modern times are not able to explain the palm-leaf Panji manuscripts to our satisfaction. Recently a scientific work on the Kayastha Panji based on palm-leaf manuscripts by Binod

Bihari Varma has come out. This work is superior to Ramnath Jha's in respect of methodology and approach and is more scientific. The only foreign traveller's account known to us is that of Dharmaswami, who visited Mithila in the thirteenth century A.D. and met Ramasimhadeva of the Karnata dynasty in his capital at Simaraongarh. Dharmaswami mentions the fortifications of Simaraongarh, repeated attacks of the Muslims in the area of Vaisali, the existence of Vaivarta script and many other social and religious customs. All these sources taken together enable us in reconstructing the history of Mithila under the Karnatas (C. 1097 to 1325 A.D.)

In the absence of a Megasthenes, a Fahien or a Hiuentasang, we have to take recourse to all indigenous sources like the manuscripts and their colophons and other contemporary literary sources. The local authors and scholars serving under the various monarchs of different periods have left the names of some of their masters in the colophons of their manuscripts. The evidence called from these sources and other contemporary manuscripts and inscriptions of Nepal and Bengal and nearby territories give us a good account of the Karnatas of Mithila.

Notes

1. D.S. Trivedi—*History of Pre-Mauryan Bihar*, p. 82 ff.
2. *Ganganath Jha Comm. Volume* pp. 250-51.
3. *Purusapariksa : An important source of our Political History* (*Journal of Oriental Thought*, Vol. I. No. IV).

A brief survey of history of Mithila down to A.D. 1097

Mithila was the centre of earliest Brahmanical civilization in the east and was the extreme east of the land of the Aryans. There is no particular reference about it in the Vedas and it is quite likely that in course of Aryan expansion it might have taken a long time to establish the Aryan supremacy in the east. It is perhaps the only centre which has been able to preserve its cultural continuity since the beginning of Aryan civilization and has not till now lost the tradition of its brilliant past. While the eastern tracts remained outside the pale of Aryan civilization, the full Aryanhood of the people of Videha is readily accepted. The Videhas had their capital at Mithila.

The *Satapathabrahmana* relates a legend in which three stages of the eastward migration of the Aryans can be clearly distinguished. Mathav, the king of Videgha, whose family priest was Gotam Rahugana was at one time on the bank of Saraswati. Agnivaishwanara thence went burning along the earth towards the east followed by Mathav and his priest, Gotam Rahugana till he came to the river Sadanira (Gandak) which he did not burn over. It is to Videgha Mathav that the Brahmanisation of this region is attributed and he is probably the earliest recorded monarch.

From the Ramayana we learn that Siradhwaja Janaka made his position secure in Mithila by killing one Sundhanavana, the Sankasya and placing his (Janaka's) brother on the throne. This fact has been mentioned in the *Visnupurana* and hence the statement of the *Bhagwatapurana* that Kusadhwaja was the son of Siradhwaja Janaka stands rejected. King Janaka of the Upanisadic fame was a direct descendant of Siradhwaja Janaka. It is said that Divodas defeated a Maithili king. Kosala King Paratanara Hairanyanabha is said to have conquered Videha and it was on account of this reason that Videha had developed some aversion for Kosala. Eggeling is of the opinion that the people of Kosala and Videha claimed Videgha Mathav as their common ancestor but the two branches were separated by the river Sadanira. Videha constituted the extreme east of the Aryan lands. In view of non-availability of facts and other corroborative evidences, it is extremely difficult to locate these stray references in the political history of Mithila. This much can be safely said that in course of time Videhan monarchy succeeded in establishing a powerful empire.

During the time of Janaka, Videha was at the apex of its glory. He was a contemporary of Dasaratha of Ayodhya and Pramati of Vaisali. He concluded a matrimonial alliance with the King of Ayodhya. He is considered to be the most popular king of his time and during his rule the Brahmanical system was fully stabilized in Videha. His court was full of eminent scholars from different parts of the country and the *Brihadaranyaka Upanisada* is full of praise for him. If the theory of the eastern origin of the *white Yajurveda* be accepted, it is quite likely that it must have in the land of Videha where the famous philosophical discourse took place in the court of Janaka. He was renowned for his munificence. At the aswamedha-sacrifice he sought to know as to who was the wisest man in the sacred assembly and offered a prize of one thousand cows to be presented to the man who proved himself to be the wisest. Yajnavalkya won the prize and became the preceptor of the king. In book XI of the *Satapathabrahmana* there is a repeated mention of the same story of how king Janaka confounded the priest by his personal ability and knowledge and finding not a single

satisfactory answer, remarked even upon Yajnavalkya that the true meaning of Agnihotra or fire sacrifice had not yet dawned. Yajnavalkya confessed his ignorance to king Janaka and begged to be instructed by him.

The *Brihadaranyaka Upanisada* gives another instance of a dialogue between Maitreyi and Yajnavalkya at the court of Janaka and these dialogues point to the great erudition of women of Mithila. Mithila was not only one of the flourishing towns of the period but also a great centre for the development of Vedic culture as a whole.

From the Mahabharata we learn that king Janaka disputed with a nun, Sulabha by name. According to the Sabhaparva, Bhima after the accession of Yudhishthira defeated the king of Videha in course of his 'digavijaya.' Karna is also said to have taken Mithila under his sway. Krishna, Bhimasena and Arjuna are said to have visited Mithila on their way from Indraprastha to Rajgir. According to S.N. Pradhan, Sri Krishna Vasudeva went to Mithila to see his Brahmana friend Srutadeva and there he found Vahulasva ruling. Kausiki was the eastern most boundary of Mithila according to the Mahabharata and it was on the Kausiki that Viswamitra attained his Brahmanahood. During the Mahabharata war, Videha was an ally of Kuru. Why did the king of Mithila fight against the Pandavas? According to the Adiparva, the father of the Pandavas, Pandu had conquered Mithila and that incurred the wrath of the Maithil king. According to the Sabhaparva, Bhima and Karna had also attacked Mithila and Nepal. All these acts of aggression had irritated the ruler of Mithila and it seems plausible why the king of Mithila sided with the Kurus. Duryodhana was well known in Mithila where he had learnt the 'gadavidya' or the science of mace. It is said that in this war the, Videha king was killed.

Mithila is very frequently mentioned in the Jatakas. According to Jatakas, the great city of Mithila was composed in part of four suburbs extending beyond each of its four gates. We further learn that the kingdom of Videha had ten thousand villages. It was frequented by the merchants from the different parts of the country and traders from Sravasti used to visit

Videha to sell their goods. The Jatakas further inform us that polygamy was in vogue in Mithila though Maithil kings were men of high education and culture. In the time of Buddha one Sumitra was ruling as a king of Mithila and he was devoted to the study of true law. Videha at that time was famous for the manufacture of sword. Videhan princes used to be educated at Taxila.

Vaisali according to the Ramayana consisted of three main divisions namely Vaisali, Kundagrama and Vaniyagrama. It is believed to have been founded by Ikshvaku. Vaisali is said to have been founded by one Visala. When Rama visited Mithila Pramati was ruling over Vaisali. After Pramati Vaisali was annexed to Kosala. After the decay of the Kosalan hegemony Vaisali came under the sway of Mithila. Later on, when Videhan monarchy was disintegrated, the entire area was broken into a number of aristocratic republics.

Among the sixteen Mahajanapadas, we find Videha and Vaisali as important states. The *Arthashastra* of Kautilya records the downfall of the last of the Janakas, Karala Janaka by name. After him the kingship was abolished and replaced by a republic. Videhas joined the confederacy of the Vajjis. In the Buddhist period, Mithila and Vaisali merged into one and the traders from this region used to go to Suvarnabhumi for trade. In the Buddhist literature Videha is mentioned as a republic. Kautilya mentions Lichhavis separately and means by the Vrijjis the Videhans only.

Videhans are treated as republicans by Patanjali. The Vrijji oligarchy replaced the old monarchical rule of Videha and the centre of political gravity shifted from Janakapura to Vaisali. We learn from the *Kalpasutras* that Vardhamana Mahavira spent his rainy seasons at many places and Mithila was one of his favourite and famous resorts where he is said to have spent six seasons. Vaisali during the period was an excellent town and a veritable heaven. The Lichhavis emerged as one of the most important political powers. The earliest political fact about them is that they gave one of their daughters in marriage to Bimbisara of Magadha. They were also on friendly terms with

Kosala and the Mallas. Ajatasatru conquered Vaisali and Tirhut and it is yet an enigma of history as to why the Buddha, who knew of the preparation of Ajatasatru against Vaisali, did not inform the Lichhavis of the same during his last visit and on his way to Kusinara.¹ History of Vaisali was otherwise very important from the administrative point of view. It was also an important centre of Buddhism and the second Buddhist council was held here. After the victory of Ajatasatru, Videha and Vaisali formed part of the Magadhan empire. Mahapadmananda is also said to have conquered Mithila.

The establishment of the Mauryan empire in 323 B.C. marked a landmark in the history of India. It appears that the territories of Vaisali and Videha formed part of the Mauryan empire. Asoka is said to have visited Vaisali which lay on the road between Pataliputra and Nepal.

During the Mauryan period Vaisali formed an important administrative centre. During the time of Asoka Buddhist monks from Magadha and Tirhut went in large numbers to preach Buddhism in Tibet. After the fall of the Mauryas the Sungas are believed to have held sway but we are not in a position to state clearly and categorically whether the hold was real or imaginary. The history of Mithila between 148 B.C. and 320 A.D. is dark and we have no positive evidence at our disposal to say anything definite on the point. It is believed, on the basis of some shaky evidence that the Kusanas extended their authority upto the confines of Vaisali, wherefrom Kanishka is believed to have carried off the arms bowl of the Buddha. After the Kusanas, the Sakas seem to have had some connections with Vaisali as in seal number 248 we have the following inscriptions: "The seal of the great queen Prabhudama, sister of the king, the Mahaksatrapa Swami Rudrasingh."² It appears that after the fall of the Mauryas, the Lichhavis possibly maintained their autonomy and identity as we find them emerging as a powerful factor to be reckoned with in the history of North India in the fourth century A.D.

The political curtain rises upon the wedding of princess Kumaradevi with Chandragupta I, a petty landlord. This alliance with the Lichhavi dynasty enabled him to make a bid

for the imperial power and that goes on to illustrate that the Lichhavis were politically important and militarily strong at that time. They were possibly the masters of Pataliputra. Mithila during the Gupta Period formed a part of the Gupta empire and Vaisali constituted a viceroyalty under the imperial prince, namely Govindagupta. Tirabhukti was one of the several Bhuktis. The Basarh seals throw an interesting light on the Gupta administrative system.

A clay seal reads—"Mahadevi Sri Dhruvaswamini, wife of Sri Chandragupta and mother of Govindagupta." It is presumed that Govindagupta was the governor of the province during the life time of his father. He was the heir apparent and the Yuvaraja and had his separate military establishment. He carried on the administration in his name. The Vaisali seals discovered in the excavations of 1903-4 and 1913-14 by Bloch and Spooner respectively draw our attention towards the existence of numerous officials—Uparika (Governor), Kumara Amatyā (Cadet minister), the Mahapratihara (the great Chamberlain), Talawara (General or local chief), the Mahadandanyaka (the great Commandant), the Vinayasthitisthapaka (the Censor)³ and the Bhataswapati, (Lord of the Army and Cavalry). Besides we have yet another list of the following offices—Yuvaraja-Padiyakumara-Amatyadhikarna (Office of the minister of the His Highness to the Crown prince), Ranabhandagara-Adhikarna (Office of the Chief Treasurer of the war department), Baladhikarna (War Office), Dandapasadhikarana (Office of the Governor of Tirhut), Tirabhuktau-vinayasthitisthapaka-adhikarana (Office of the Censor of Tirhut), Vaisali-adhisthanadhikarana (Office of the Government of the City of Vaisali), Sriparamabhattaraka-padiyakumaramatyā-adhikarana (Office of the Cadet-Minister waiting on His Majesty). This Office according to H.C. Raichaudhury maintains a very clear and unmistakable distinction between the imperial officials and those connected with viceregal administration amongst the latter, however, the officials of the province of Tirabhukti are clearly distinguished from the list of public servants in charge of subordinate administration of the adhisthana of Vaisali.⁴

The history of Mithila after 550 A. D. is nothing more than a drama of constant warfares and invasions accompanied with

alround indiscriminate depredations. Mithila was a silent spectator of the most ignominious scene of the retreating forces and advancing army, all measuring their mighty swords with one another and ultimately falling off one by one. Mithila was a cockpit of power politics as subsequent events would show and the upstart political adventurers took their chance for the attainment of political power in this region. The position of the Gupta empire in the fourth decade of the sixth century A. D. was very shaky. Yasodharmana had outraged a large portion of the territories of northern India and had uprooted the Dattas of Bengal. Visnugupta, the last Gupta Governor of Pundrabhukti fell prey to cruel sword of Yasodharmana. The Gupta dynasty came to an end in 554 A. D. and the drama of the decline was so rapidly moving that it was beyond anybody's capacity to cry halt to the then decentralising tendency. The Maukharis are believed to have achieved victory over the Gaudas but even prior to that Mahabhutavarmana of Kamarupa had crossed the Kartoya and conquered a part of eastern Mithila and Moranga and in order to commemorate his conquests he issued land to the Brahmanas within the conquered area. This area continued to be under Kamarupa till the reign of Susthitavarmana when in the later half of the sixth century A. D. it was conquered by Mahasenagupta who attempted to reassert Gupta supremacy.⁵

We have hardly any information regarding the history of Tirhut after the exit of Yasodharmana. One of the Gupta feudatories, Maharenagupta, concluded a matrimonial alliance with the house of Thaneswara as a precaution against the Maukharis. This alliance placed Mahasenagupta in a very advantageous position. He defeated Susthitavarmana and asserted Gupta supremacy in the region. R.D. Banerjee holds that Mithila was included in the kingdom of Mahasenagupta. The Mahakuta inscription informs us that in the sixth century A.D. Kirtivarmana I of the Chalukya dynasty extended his power over a greater portion of Bihar.

It is held that with the dissolution of the Gupta empire after the lightning victory of Yasodharmana, the Varmana rulers of Kamarupa extended their authority westward and reached the Kosi river in the modern district of Purnea where Mahabhutavarmana is said to have made grants of land to

the Brahmanas of Mithila. On the basis of the Nidhanapur copperplates, it has been held that the Varmanas held sway over a part of North Bihar specially in the district of Purnea. Lines 126, 128 to 132 of the renewed grant by Bhaskaravarmana give the topography of the grant and from that it is evident that the area lay some where in the Kosi region.⁷ Susthitavarmana's defeat at the hands of Mahasenagupta was repaired to by Supratisthitavarmana though the latter too had to feel the weight of the Gauda arm. He was succeeded by Bhaskaravarmana who got alarmed at the success of Sasanka in Bengal and sought the friendship of Harsavardhana. The *Aryamajjusrimulakalpa* gives an account of the struggle between Sasanka and Harsavardhana. B.P. Sinha suggests, "Sasanka had to eschew his ambition to become the master of the whole of north India and had to be content with his own kingdom of Bihar, Bengal and Orissa."⁸ Sasanka conquered a considerable portion of north and south Bihar. His kingdom included Karna-Suvarna, Magadha, and the intervening tracts of Tirabhukti and Kasi. The tradition about Tirhut being a part of five divisioned-Gauda may not be a mere fiction but reminiscent of the empire of Sasanka.

Under Harsavardhana Mithila gained importance as a border province with Nepal, Tibet and China on the north, and Kamarupa on the east. Vaisali was included in the domain of Harsavardhana. Tirabhukti came under his orbit and Hiuen-t-Sang calls him as the lord of five Indies namely, (i) Punjab, (ii) Kanyakubja, (iii) Mithila, (iv) Gauda and (v) Utkala. It was possibly after the fall of Sasanka that Harsavardhana conquered Mithila. Tirhut was called Tieh-lo by the Chinese. Hiuen t-Sang visited Tirhut in 635 A.D. and found Buddhism on the wane in that region. He is silent about the nature of government in Vaisali which was in a ruinous state. There were very few Buddhists at Vaisali at that time. Tirabhukti seems to have been one of the important administrative centres under Harsavardhana and at the time of Harsa's death Arjuna or Arunasva was the governor of Tirabhukti. After the death of Harsavardhana, he is said to have usurped the throne and then the Tibetan invasion followed.

The death of Harsavardhana was followed by an upheaval of an unprecedented scale. A Chinese mission immediately reached India after Harsa's death. Arjuna or Arunasva is said to have attacked the mission. Wang, the leader of the mission sought help from Tibet and Bhaskaravarmana of Kamarupa. The mission was also helped by Nepal. The sources regarding the episode are conflicting and hence it is difficult to arrive at any particular conclusion. The extracts relating to this episode are preserved only in fragments and the later traditions are found preserved in the history of the Tang dynasty, Ma-twa-lin and other sources. We also learn from the Chinese sources that after the death of Harsavardhana there was anarchy in the country and Arjuna or Arunasva appeared on the political scene. He insulted the Wang mission and Wang went to Tibet, brought some selected Tibetan and Nepalese cavalry and infantry, captured Arjuna or Arunasva, and took him to China. All these events and accounts indicate that the usurping minister was a local ruler of Tirhut and the campaigns were confined to this region. P.C. Bagchi calls Arjuna or Arunasva, a king of Tirabhukti.⁹ Anarchy and confusion continued and upto 702 A.D. a portion of Tirhut is believed to have been under Tibetan control. Luciano Petech has shown that the Tibetan king died a little later after 702 A.D. during a campaign against Nepal and the peoples of Indian frontier that had rebelled against him.¹⁰ The Tibetan expedition did not affect the general course of Indian history though it might have disturbed a negligible portion of north Bihar for some years. While V.A. Smith regards this incident of immense significance, R.C. Mazumdar does not attach much credence to it.

Madhavagupta son of Mahasenagupta, after the death of Harsavardhana resisted the claims of Arjuna or Arunasva. He kept himself aloof from the contemporary upheavals in north Bihar and saved Magadha from Tibetan inroads. He was succeeded by Adityasena who aspired to continue spiritual heritage of the Imperial Guptas. The Nepal inscription of the time of Jaideva mentions Adityasena as a great king of Magadha. He was a powerful ruler and is credited with having driven out the Tibetans from north Bihar. But the real credit of

driving them out completely goes to the third ruler Visnugupta. The recent discovery of a copperplate from Katra police station in the district of Muzaffarpur shows that Tirabhukti continued to be an important administrative centre with a district hitherto unknown, known as Chamundavisaya. Jivitagupta II was the last ruler of the later Gupta dynasty and he was defeated by Yasovarmana of Kanauj. He also conquered Tirabhukti and then brought to an inglorious end the extensive empire of the later Guptas. We have no definite information about the history of Mithila from the fall of Yasovarmana to the rise of the Palas in 770 A.D.

The Palas established the strongest empire after the Guptas. Since the beginning of the Pala empire, Mithila appears to have been a part of it. Dharmapala was the founder of the greatness of this line and was a leading figure in the contemporary politics of India. The concept of Panchagauda beginning in the time of Sasanka reached its culmination during the Pala period. Till the time of the Palas and the Senas, Mithila was regarded as the fifth division of Bengal. Dharmapala subjugated Kamarupa, Tirhut, Gauda and other countries. He is believed to have led campaign at the foot of the Himalayas. The conquest of Mithila by Dharmapala appears to be a reality if we take into consideration his conquests in the region of Kedara, Gokarna, Nepal, Bagamati etc. His tradition was continued by his son Devapala. The brilliance of the Palas began to decline after Devapala.

The Bhagalpur grant of Narayanapala records the grant of a village to the temple of Siva in the Kaksavisaya of Tirabhukti. This record is an indelible proof of the fact that the Palas held sway over Tirabhukti since no king can make any grant in a place where he has no authority. He boasts of having built one thousand temples of Siva in that locality.

The Pratiharas also attempted at building up an All India empire but upto the time of Devapala they were successfully checked. Mahendrapala extended his conquests upto Bengal and it appears from the Dighawa-Dubauli plate that a portion of north Bihar came under the Pratiharas. During the reign of Rajyapala, the Gurjara-Pratiharas crossed the Sone and overran Tirhut. Whether they conquered whole of Tirhut or not, it is

very difficult to say. After the Pratiharas, Yasovarmana Chandel and his son Dhanga followed a policy of crippling the resources of eastern rulers when the Pala kingdom was passing through a period of stress and strain. Verse 23 of the Khajuraho inscription contains the only reference to Mithila in the Chandel records. It is said that Yasovarmana was, "a sword to cut down the Gaudas as if they were pleasure-creepers and weakened the Maithilas." After the retirement of the Chandels the Palas again restored their power under Mahipala I. The Palas were in possession of Tirhut as is evident from the Imadpura image inscriptions of Mahipala I. During this very period, it is said that Tirhut was under the control of the Kalachuris and that assertion is based on the colophon of a Ramayana manuscript. We have discussed the aspect in connection with the reign of Gangadeva and we agree with R.C. Mazumdar and R.K Chaudhary that the colophon Samvat should be taken to mean Saka era and be fixed at 1154 A.D. and not the Vikrama era as has been suggested by others. This Gangeyadeva should be identified with Gangadeva of Mithila. B.P. Sinha identifies this Gangeyadeva with a ruler of the Rastrakuta dynasty.¹¹ But he has not advanced any cogent argument in support of his contention. Similarly the conclusion of U. Thakur seems to be equally misleading.

There is some evidence to show that the Kalachuris made some devastating raids into the territory of Mithila when the Palas were also strengthening their hold on this part. Vigrahapala III is said to have defeated Karna and married latter's daughter Yauvansri. Atisa Dipankara of Vikramasila is said to have mediated between the Kalachuris and the Palas. We learn from Sandhyakara Nandi that it was a *Kapalasandhi*¹² on the basis of which Karna was protected by Vigrahapala III. This type of treaty indicates a subordinate status for Karna. The Naulagarh inscription, the Banagaon, copperplate and the evidence of the *Ramacharita* suggest that the Palas had entrenched themselves in north Bihar where they had one of their Jaiskandhavaras. The Pala rulers claimed sovereignty in north Bihar even after Vigrahapala III. Mithila remained a part of the Pala empire till the rise of Nanyadeva in 1097 A.D. Verse IV of Kamauli grant affirms that Rampala

spread the glory by gaining the country of Janaka.¹³ The Bangada grant of Mahipala also refers to the partial kingdom of the Palas. Ramapala attempted a partial rejuvenation of the Palas. During his time, Pala kingdom was limited to northern and central Bihar. Mithila was the northern border of the Pala kingdom and it was lost possibly during or after the reign of Ramapala. Traditions associate the Parmaras and the Kalachuris with the history of Mithila but we have no epigraphic, numismatic or even literary sources to substantiate this contention. We learn from Bilhana's *Vikramankadevacharita* that in the last quarter of the eleventh century A.D., Chalukya Someswara and his son Vikramaditya carried their arms successfully against a number of rulers in north India. They claim to have established their sway over Nepal, and an inscription of Someswara III (son of Vikramaditya VI) claims to have placed his feet upon the heads of the kings of Andhra, Dravida, Magadha and Nepal.¹⁴

As a result of these southern invasions, three kingdoms were established in the last decade of the eleventh century A.D. in Kanauj, Mithila and Bengal by the Gahadawalas, the Karnatas and the Senas respectively. K.P. Jayaswal rightly suggests that had a barrier not arisen in Tirhut, the Gahadawala march would not have stopped at Ayodhya.¹⁵ The king of the west against whom Vijayasena advanced through the upper course of the Ganga was possibly Govindachanda Gahadawala. The establishment of the Karnata rule in 1097 A.D. was an event of immense historical importance for the history of Bihar in general and Mithila in particular because from this date begins a period of the history of a dynasty which was destined to play a very significant role in the history of eastern India. It would not be out of place to suggest that from this date onwards the real political history of Mithila begins. This was the first historic dynasty that ruled independently and we have the advantage of being able to follow the fortunes of a single ruling dynasty. The period of instability of Mithila between 554 and 1097 A.D. gave way to a period of stabilisation and the foundation of the rule of this dynasty ushered in a new era of great progress and glorious achievements. And with this end in view, a detailed study of the

history of the Karnatas is presented here in the subsequent chapters.

Notes

1. *JOI : Ajatasatru and Lichhavis of Vaisali.*
2. *Archaeological Survey of India—Annual Report (1913-14)*
3. R.G. Basak *History of North-Eastern India* p. 312.
4. U. Thakur *TM* p. 187-88.
5. *JIH* xxxii p. 130.
6. *JBORS* XIV pp. 254-65.
7. Nidhanapur Copperplate in the proceedings of *ICH* (1959).
8. *DKM* p. 257.
9. *Sino-Indian Studies*, -1. p. 68.
10. L. Petech. *A study of the chronicles of Laddakh*, pp. 51-57.
11. *DKM* p. 412.
12. *Ramacharita* p. 19.
13. *EI* p. 355.
14. *JBBRAS* XI p. 268.
15. *JBORS*, IX, p. 307-8, X, pp. 40-41.

Origin of the Karnatas of Mithila

After a brief resume of the political history of Mithila down to 1097 A.D., we now pass on to discuss the origin of the Karnatas of Mithila who held sway over the territory from 1097 to 1325 A.D. and the period of their rule marks a turning point in the contemporary history of India. It has been clearly seen above that Mithila experienced numerous ups and downs and chaos and confusion reigned supreme everywhere. It apparently appeared as if Mithila had become politically dormant and culturally stagnant. After centuries of chaos and confusion, defeats and humiliations, shocks and surprises, there emerged on the scene a great hero named Nanyadeva, belonging to the Karnata dynasty, who succeeded in changing the face of Mithila and subsequently brought it on the political and cultural map of eastern India. The year 1097 A.D., thus, forms a landmark in the history of Mithila.

Although the modern researches have brought to light vast mass of materials and evidence, having some bearing on the Karnatas, yet an absolutely correct and authentic picture regarding their origin is still a desideratum. The Monghyr copperplate¹ of Devapala mentions the Karnatas along with many others. The word finds mention in almost all the Pala

and other contemporary inscriptions. The Sena inscriptions reveal to us that originally the Karnatas belonged to the South.² Nanyadeva, the founder of the dynasty in Mithila has been referred to as "Karnata-Kulabhusan." His counterpart in Bengal was known as the "Kulasiromani of the Karnata Ksatriyas".³ We may very safely draw a similar inference on the basis of the Naihatti grant of Ballalasena.⁴ One can arrive at the conclusion that some Karnata chiefs actually acquired political power and established a new kingdom. The storming of the capital of Parmara King Bhoja I and the destruction of the Kalachuri King Karna by Someswara I (1040-1069 A.D.) actually facilitated the path of Karnata domination in the realm of north Indian politics. The process ultimately resulted in the establishment of the Karnata dynasty.

Like the Senas of Bengal, the Karnatas of Mithila came from the south in the wake of the Chalukyan invasion of Someswara I (1040-1069 A.D.) and his son Vikramaditya VI (1076-1126 A.D.).⁵ Vikramaditya organized onslaughts against Gauda and Kamarupa; and it so happened that by the end of eleventh century A.D., the north Indians were subjugated. This process undoubtedly paved the way of Karnata consolidation and supremacy. The emergence of the Chalukyas has a very significant political bearing. It actually ushered in a new epoch and marked a crucial turning point in history of India in general and that of Mithila in particular. Someswara III, son of Vikramaditya VI, has been described as having stepped upon the heads of the kings of Andhra, Dravida, Magadha and Nepal.⁶ The Basahi plate of Govindchanda Gahadawala of Kanauj⁷ also supports the rout of the Parmaras at the hands of the Chalukyas. As a result of the Chalukyan invasion, three dynasties of Kanauj Mithila, and Bengal came to lime-light in north India. R.C. Mazumdar is of the opinion that the deluge of Karnata invasion ushered in three new dynasties at Kanauj, Mithila and Bengal.⁸ There is another theory about the origin of the Karnatas. According to this theory the Karnatas were occupying high positions during the Pala administration in Bengal and Magadha. It is probable that when Pala's authority weakened, the Karnata chiefs derived advantage of the situation. Nilakantha

Sastri is of the opinion that the mention of Karnatas in the Pala inscriptions is fictitious and any inference may lead to some wrong conclusions. The Karnata invasion from south spearheaded by Vikramaditya VI is described to have acquired large territories. The Tamil poem "Kalingattaparni" describing the Chola conquest of north Kalinga gives a long list of people who were obliged to pay tributes to Kullotunga, the Chola King (1070-1118 A.D.).⁹ This account is further supported by Darksarma inscription.¹⁰ The Chola conquest included Vanga, Bangalas and Magadhas. This was the time when Karnatas were making their headway in this region. These two groups of southern invaders ravaged parts of Pala kingdom including Mithila which was under the sway of Ramapala. Ramapala might have desired to enter into an alliance to counteract the common enemy, Karnatas.¹¹ Sandhyakara Nandi's *Ramcharita* suggests that "Varendra was successfully guarded against Karnatas." The Palas were compelled to face two turbulent rising chiefs¹² —Vijayasena in Bengal and Nanyadeva in Mithila.

A set of scholars have put forward another theory about the origin of the Karnatas. According to them Karnatas were simply the results of the eclipsed Karnata power in Magadha.¹³ In their view Rajendra Chola Gangaikonda had a strong commonsense and clear grasp of the political situation in north India and he made a successful bid for supremacy. The Tirumalai inscription and also the inscription No. 44 at Kolar¹⁴ narrate the achievements of his conquest. He is said to have "attacked Bangaldesa from which Govindachanda fled and took territory where the monsoon never ceases."¹⁵ He is credited with having vanquished Mahipala.¹⁶ Kielhorn is of the opinion that Mahipala referred to in the Chola inscription is the first Pala ruler of that name. But a careful and critical study of the contemporary sources show that the conquest of Rajendra Chola did not affect the political condition of Bengal and neighbouring kingdoms. Aiyangar is of the opinion that Dandabhukti denoted Bihar with Orissa but this identification is not unanimously accepted.

There was a family of Rastrakuta Karnatas in the region of Dandabhukti planted either by Dhruva or Govind III.

Dharmapala of Dandabhukti was most probably a relative of Gauda ruling over the territory of eclipsed Karnatas.

M. Ramakrishna Kavi is of the view that the Rastrakutas were the Karnatas. According to him the Rastrakutas, after their decline in 970 A. D. in the south, moved towards the north.¹⁷ But M. Ramkrishna Kavi fails to provide any convincing explanation for the so-called migration of the Rastrakutas from south to north. If, however, the theory of the Rastrakuta expansion has got to be accepted, it is plausible that Karnatas made advances along with Chalukyas. Further, Chalukyan invasion generated self-confidence among the Karnatas and they asserted independence in the last decade of the eleventh century A.D. Nanyadeva, the founder of the Karnata dynasty, is described as the brother of Kirtiraja which is evident from the Bodh-Gaya inscription of Tunga Dharmavaloka. Although the identification lacks corroborative evidence and cannot be accepted as such in the present state of our knowledge,¹⁸ yet it has got to be taken into serious consideration.

Ksameswara's *Chanda Kausika* describes that Mahipala of Pala dynasty defeated the Karnata chief who had invaded Bengal. This manuscript is dated 1331 A.D. and refers indirectly to a trial of strength between Mahipala and the Karnatas. The Chalukyas of Kalyana were, at this period, rulers of Karnata but surprisingly none of the contemporary inscriptions of the Chalukya sovereigns refers to any conflict with the Palas. According to R. P. Chanda, the Karnatas were soldiers who are credited with having invaded the kingdom of Mahipala.²⁰ H. P. Sastri writes that people defeated by Mahipala might have been connected with the Karnatas who are known to have established themselves in Bengal and Mithila later on. In the present state of our knowledge, it is extremely difficult to be precise with regard to the time as to when the Karnatas first settled in Bengal and Mithila. They apparently seem to have formed an element in the Pala administration and Pala grants bear testimony to this effect. The series of southern invasion might have been quite possibly responsible for the regular inflow of Karnata settlers in Bengal and Mithila. Most likely, the fresh wave of Karnatakendu Vikramaditya VI gave them impetus to stabilise their position as independent rulers after

the local central authority became weak and incapable²⁰ of resisting the forces of disintegration which had set in on account of constant onslaughts from the south.

If, however, the theory of the Rastrakuta Karnatas living in Dandabhukti be accepted, in that case it can be undoubtedly concluded that the Karnatas were the result of the eclipsed Karnata power in Magadha and not of the Chola conquest as many scholars believe. K.P. Jayaswal is of the opinion that the Karnatas were the remnants of the Chola army or more likely Karnata allies of Karna who is described to have ravaged Mithila between 1040 and 1060 A.D. We have to bear in mind that Karna's expedition occurred about forty years before the accession of Nanyadeva.²¹ R.D. Banerjee also suggests that the Karnatas were the remnants of the Chola army,²² and K.P. Jayaswal seems simply to follow R. D. Banerjee in his assertion.²³ The view held by R. D. Banerjee and K. P. Jayaswal is seemingly improbable as there is nothing concrete to substantiate that the Karnatas formed a part of the Chola army. This view has been rejected by many scholars,²⁴ as it lacks authenticity. Regarding the suggestion that the Karnatas were the remnants of the Karnata allies of Karna, we have to consider that Karna's alliance with them was of purely temporary nature.²⁵ It is evident from the Nagpur Prasasti of Udayaditya that the Karnatas formed an alliance with Chedi King Karna, who with their assistance, overran Malwa like a sea.²⁶ On this authority, accompanied by the assertions of R.D. Banerjee and K.P. Jayaswal, B.C. Sen suggests that "this alliance probably facilitated the movements that soon after Karna's death made a Karnata warrior called Nanya, the ruler of Mithila."²⁷ K.P. Jayaswal wrongly believed that since Mithila had already been under Chedi king, the Karnata-families had come in Karna's train.²⁸ But in view of modern researches and more scientific and convincing theories regarding the origin of the Karnatas, this view is untenable.

The most reasonable view seems to be that before the Palas could derive advantage of the difficulties of the Kalachuris, they had to face an invasion from the Chalukyas of Karnata.²⁹ The earliest invasion of the Chalukyas must have taken place before 1053 A.D.³⁰ Yet another important Chalukyan expedition was

organised against Vanga and the neighbouring countries in the last decade of the eleventh century A. D.³¹ or even at the beginning of the twelfth century A.D. It is likely that successive southern onslaughts provided the local chieftains with an opportunity to assert their authority. Thakur³² has followed R.D. Banerjee and K.P. Jayaswal. It has been further established that Nanyadeva was a junior contemporary of Dharmapala of Kamarupa.³³ The *Kalikapurana*, compiled during the reign of Dharmapala has got the earliest reference in the *Bharatabharya* of Nanyadeva. Bassattariya Brahmana-families in Assam, which was a renowned seat of 'tantricism', came probably from Mithila. The sole purpose of the *Purana* seems to establish some relationship of Kamarupa with Mithila.

Nanyadeva was a Karnataksatriya and there is possibly no doubt about it as is evident from his various epithets. The commentary on Bharata's *Natyasastra* enables us to know that he was addressed as "Karnatakulabhushan." K.P. Jayaswal believes that his name is only a Sanskritised form of Dravidian "Nanniya" meaning affectionate.³⁴ D.R. Regmi says that Nanya is a word of Karnatic origin and in Nepal the Naniya or Nani, an expression of endearment, is derivative of the same. This is used often by seniors to address their pet juniors.³⁵ Nanniya, Nanyupa and other such names of Nanyadeva are known to us from the traditions current in Mithila and preserved by such authentic traditional writers as Parmeswara Jha in his famous *Mithilatattwvimarsa* and Ras Bihari Das in his *Mithiladarpana*. The Deopara inscription unmistakably calls Vijayasena a scion of Karnata dynasty and Nanyadeva is also mentioned therein. In the last quarter of the eleventh century A.D., when the invasions from the south were providing a set back to political stability in the north India, the Karnatas managed to gain permanent footing in the eastern region of north India and carved out for themselves small independent kingdoms which were to play very important roles in the centuries which followed.³⁶ For a systematic study of the period, it is desirable to connect the rise of the Karnatas of Mithila with the victorious military campaigns of the Chalukyas.

The ancestors of Nanyadeva were petty chieftains and adventurers in the eastern India, and deriving advantage from

the chaos and confusion obtaining in the region, Nanyadeva or his ancestors seem to have asserted independence.³⁷ It is likely that the assertion of independence might have coincided with Chalukyan invasion during the reign of Vikramaditya VI. The Karnatas of Mithila have also been called *Karnatachudamani* in the Nepal inscriptions,³⁸ *Karnatavamsodaaya* and *Karnatadhpa*³⁹ by Chandeswara and *Karnatakulaksmi*⁴⁰ in the Sena G. Karnatakulalaksmi inscriptions.⁴¹

As late as 1162 A.D. Nepal finds mention as a vassal state of Someswara III in the Patnakadal stone inscription.⁴² The condition of Nepal was unstable and chaotic and is attested by a number of epigraphs and *Vamsavali* sources. In view of all these available materials, it is plausible to hold that "the forefathers of Nanyadeva established themselves as feudatory chiefs in Tirhut, on the border of Nepal, as a result of the successive raids on the great Chalukyan prince to the foothills of the Himalayan range.... and after the withdrawal, of the strong Chalukyan arm they rose to pre-eminence, broke off their allegiance and established themselves as rulers of Tirhut."⁴³

Nanyadeva was the first ruler of this dynasty. He established his supremacy over this region with the assistance of Chalukyan King Vikramaditya VI. Levi is of the view that Nanyadeva, first of all, accepted service under some unknown king, took advantage of the weakness of his master and ultimately established his authority. It is well known that Pala rulers had appointed many Karnata officers under them. D.C. Ganguly thinks that Nanyadeva was an Officer under the Palas and established a kingdom in Tirabhukti (Tirhut) during the Kaivarta revolt. A new danger which confronted Ramapala on the eve of his fight with Kaivarta Bhima, mentioned in the *Ramcharita* might be referring to this incident.⁴⁴

According to the traditions which are not to be rejected outright, Nanyadeva, or more correctly Nanyupadeva, founded in the year 1097 A. D. Simrouna, the ancient capital of the kingdom of Mithila situated in the Nepal Tarai, in the ruins of which many statues and idols have been found.⁴⁵ The available evidence enables us to suggest that the Karnatas of Mithila were southerners.

The Karnatas seem to have been very powerful 'Samantas' in the valley of Nepal and also the Tarai area during the reign of Ramapala. Subsequently, they took advantage of the weakness of the Pala kings and established for themselves an independent dynasty in 1097 A. D. The Karnatas ruled over Mithila from C. 1097 to 1324-25 A. D. With the advent of the Karnatas in Mithila, we come to a surer and sober footing of history.

Notes

1. Cf. *CIB* (Pala Inscriptions) *IB*, 110-113. H.C. Raichaudhury, *Studies in Indian Antiquities*, p. 157.
2. *Inscriptions of Bengal*. No. 110, 113 Verse IV Cf. *IHQ* XII (611-12).
3. *JASB*, N.v. of 1909, p. 471 Verse No. Modhinagar Grant.
4. *EI*. XIV .p. 159.
5. Bilhan's Introduction to *Vikramankadevacharita* Cf. *IHQ* VII. p. 683.
6. *JBBARS*, IX p. 268. *IHQ* VII p. 683' E.C. IX.
7. *IA* XIV p. 103.
8. *IHQ* VII p. 684.
9. *IA* XIX 329 ff.
10. *EI* XXII p. 138 ff.
11. *RC* III p. 24.
12. Ep. Carnatica, XI. *Inscriptions of Devanagara Taluq* No. 2, 3, Cf. *MB* p. 164.
13. *PAIOC* III p. 398.
14. *EI-XI*-p. 230-31.
15. *PAIOC* III p. 396.
16. *SII*. III Part-III pp. 424-25 *JIH* III 320 ff. Cf. K.A.N. Sastri : *The Cholas* p. 247 ff. Also Cf. *MB* p. 138-39, 209.
17. *JAHR*S. I, Page 57.
18. *Ibid*. p, 56-57; Cf *PIHC*, Jaipur Session.
20. *Gaudaragamala*, p. XI for different views Cf. *HAIB* p. 396-97.
21. *IA.*, 1918, p. 290, 1919, p. 144 ff.

22. *PIHC.*, XI V, p. 130.
23. *PB*-p. 99.
24. *JBORS.* IX-p. 306.
25. *IAG.* VII-p. 681 *DHNI*-I p. 316 fn 3.4.
26. *IHQ.* XII-pp. 475-76.
27. *EI*-II p. 185.
28. *HAIB.* p. 456 Cf. J.N. Banerjee Comm. Volume. edited by D.C. Sircar.
29. *JBORS* IX p. 307,
30. *Vikramankadevcharita* III p. 74.
31. *EI* IV p. 262.
32. *IA* 1919 p. 114. Bombay Gazetteer. Vol. 1. p. II, p. 219.
33. *TM.* p. 231, Cf. *HAIA*, p. 456. Also Gaudarajamala, p. 47.
34. *IHQ.* XXIII, p. 326 of K. L. Barua. *Early History of Kamarupa.*
35. *JBORS.* IX p. 306.
36. D. R. Regmi *HMN* p. 152.
37. *IHQ* VII p. 681 XXX ff.
38. *DHNI* I p. 203.
39. *IA.* 1880 p. 188 Levi to Nepal II. p. 221-22.
40. *JASC* (L), p. 186.
41. *Charitakosa* (Marathi) Sv. Nanyadeva.
42. *EII* p. 305. *JASB* p. 190-9, 467 ff. *EI* XV 282.
43. Q. Journal of the Mythical Society XLIV p. 1 Cf. *IHQ* XXX p. 206.
44. *TM.*
45. *HCIP* V p. 47.
46. *JBORS* XXVIII p. 131 Cf. B.H. Hedgeson. An account of a visit to the ruins of Simaraon. Once the capital of Mithila province in the *JASB* V p. 121 Cf. *PIHC* XIV p. 130 ff. For inscriptions at Simaraon, vide *CIB*.

Career and Achievement of Nanyadeva

Nanyadeva is credited with having established the Karnata dynasty in 1097 A. D.¹ Taking advantage of the disturbed situation, the Gahadawalas consolidated their position in Kanauj, the Senas established themselves in Bengal, and the Karnatas in Mithila. Ramapala was in hot soup and had to confront enemies on all sides. Nanyadeva took delight in fishing in the troubled waters of the contemporary situation and laid the foundation of an independent Karnata kingdom. The establishment of the Karnata dynasty under Nanyadeva was one of the important events of history as it ushered into a new era of progress and stabilization of political power in Mithila.

Much work has been done to fix the date of Nanyadeva. Scholars have varied opinion about the time of his accession. Till very recently there was dearth of sufficient chronological account about the Karnatas of Mithila, though there were enough scattered materials at our disposal,

The first connected account of the history of Mithila was published in the *JASB* (New Series) 1915 by Manmohan Chakravarty. The scholar placed Nanyadeva in the twelfth

century A.D.² But Kielhorn placed Nanyadeva in the Saka era 1019 or 1097 A.D. The date of Nanyadeva is known to us from the so called Simaraon stone pillar inscription and the exact replica of the text is preserved in the *Nepal-Vamsavali* records. The verse in question was brought to notice by Chanda Jha in his edition of the text of Vidyapati's *Purusapariksa*.³ It is understood that the fort of Simaraongarha was built by Nanyadeva. A competent authority is of the opinion that the date contained in the inscription is of marvellous accuracy and its parallel is not to be found in the domain of the antiquities of Bengal and Magadha. It states that Nanyadeva made an erection in 'simhalagna' or a Saturday in a solar Sravana, a tithi being Sukla seven nakshatra swati in the year Saka 1019,⁴ which corresponds with July 10, 1097 A.D. Levi has interpreted this verse with slight variation here and there.⁵

There are conflicting evidence and information about Nanyadeva in the Nepalese sources. Manmohan Chakravarty's fixation of the date of Nanyadeva is based on the synchronism of Malladeva (son of Nanyadeva and the Gahadawala king Jayachanda 1170-1193 A.D.). As Malladeva is said to have served under Gahadawala king Jayachanda, Manmohan Chakravarty seems to have placed Nanyadeva in middle of the twelfth century A.D., simply to prove the contention of Vidyapati.⁶ It is said that Malladeva was only of sixteen years while at the Court of Jayachanda and therefore Malladeva could not have been born before 1154 A.D. if the contention of Vidyapati is to be taken into consideration. But in view of the evidence at our disposal we cannot push the date of Nanyadeva beyond 1150 A.D. The view held by Manmohan Chakravarty that Malladeva died at the age of sixteen has also been accepted by R.C. Mazumdar,⁷ but it does not hold good as Vidyapati makes no mention of the death of Malladeva. Most of the scholars are prone to believe that the Karnata dynasty was founded by Nanyadeva in 1097 A.D.⁸ The error in interpretation of the *Nepal Vamsavali* was due to wrong interpretation of the first line of the so called Simaraon inscription. According to K.P. Jayaswal, the mistake crept in due to reading the date from left to right as opposed to the accepted dictum right to left⁹ (*ankanam Vamategatih*). Kirpatrick puts the

date at 901 A.D., Bhagwanlal at 811 A.D., and K.C. Pandey at the close of the 10th century A.D. K.C. Pandey¹⁰ has dwelt at length the date of Nanyadeva. He has raised certain problems—Abhinavagupta in his commentary on Bharata's *Natyasastra* refers to Nanyadeva and quotes from his *Bharatabhasya* like this "*Uktam Nanyadevana Sva Bharatabhasya*" (p. 122). K.C. Pandey observes, "Nanyadeva finished his commentary on Bharata's *Natyasastra* before the close of the tenth century A.D. (p. 172)." He further writes, "It may be suggested here that if Gangadeva, the successor of Nanyadeva, be identical with Gangeyadeva as R.C. Mazumdar suggests, then the colophon of a book noticed by Bendall, which refers to Tirhut being ruled over by Gangeyadeva and is dated in Samvat 1076, puts Nanyadeva at a time which satisfactorily explains the fact of his having been quoted by Abhinavagupta early in the eleventh century A.D. K.C. Pandey does not regard Nanyadeva's time and date as finally settled.

But we have to keep in view that the suggestion of K. C. Pandey about following the datum, put forward by Bendall. It does not settle the difficulty as Bendall regards Gangeyadeva as a Kalachuri king and not a Karnata. Nowhere is there any mention of Nanyadeva known to us as belonging to the Karnata dynasty and ruler of Mithila and naturally, therefore, it is not possible to accept the proposition of K. C. Pandey in view of modern researches. All evidence—literary, traditional and epigraphic confirm that Nanyadeva ascended the throne in 1097 A. D. and that he was the author of a commentary on Bharata's *Natyasastra*.¹¹

According to M. Ramakrisna Kavi Nanyadeva closely follows Abhinavagupta and at two places Nanyadeva mentions the great commentator even by name. Abhinavagupta died in 1030 A. D. The so called mention of Nanyadeva in Abhinavagupta seems to be a later interpolation in the manuscript and such interpolations are not very rare in Ancient India. Finally, it seems that there is no need of any further controversy with regard to the date of Nanyadeva, which, for all practical purposes, seems to be finally settled. It is also probable that since Nanyadeva was an authoritative commentator, his views might have attracted interpolator to commit this

intentional mistake of inserting Nanyadeva's name in Abhinavagupta. The discovery of a new manuscript of Abhinavagupta may solve this problem. The Nepal *Vamsavali*, but for a minor mistake of reading the first line, correctly gives us the date of the Karnata dynasty. The date of Harisimhadeva is also correctly given as 1324-25 A.D. and the total period of the reign of the Karnatas in the Nepalese records correspond to the local and traditional sources.

The traditional sources possess an account of the flight of Harisimhadeva to Nepal, a fact supported by various sources including a Persian manuscript 'Basatin-ul-uns' (now preserved in the British Museum).¹² The manuscript of a drama *Muditakuvalayasva* (1628 A.D.) by Jagjyotiramala, who claims to be a descendant of Harisimhadeva, records the date as follows "Navendukha Chandrayukte Saka" corresponding to July 18, 1097. Here we find a difference of only eight days if we interpret in the light of Simaraon inscriptions, verified to have been a Saturday in Swati Nakshatra.¹³ The date of Nanyadeva, given in the traditional chronogram, occurs in most of the Nepalese chronicles. But in its most correct form it is found only in the *VK* and in the *Muditakuvalasyasva*. Considering many variations in most of the sources, and in view of the points discussed above, we should accept the date of Nanyadeva's accession as July 18, 1097 A.D.¹⁴ Kielhorn while editing the Deopara inscription placed Nanyadeva in Saka 1019 (1097 A.D.). The epithets used in Nanyadeva's own commentary can be verified only when we take into consideration the contemporary political events. His contemporaries are known to us from the inscriptions of different shade and nature. The Deopara inscription of Vijayasena helps in ascertaining his date. He has been mentioned in Deopara inscription as Nanya, and finds place in the Andhratharhi inscription of Sridharadasa.¹⁵ On the basis of evidence discussed, it can be said the date of Nanyadeva should be taken as settled unless more authentic and fresh materials are forthcoming. Nanyadeva is said to have ruled for 50 years (c. 1097 A.D. to 1147 A.D.)

CONQUESTS OF NANYADEVA

Nanyadeva impresses us as an ordinary feudatory chief at the initial stage of his political career. This view is supported by his own commentary on Bharata's *Natyasastra*. The available portion of the commentary helps us to locate the identity of Nanyadeva—"Mahasamantadhipati Dharmavaloka Srimana Nanyapati." Here we have to bear in mind that in the Andhratharhi inscription of his minister, Sridharadasa, Nanyadeva is referred to as 'Srimana Nanyapati.' It can be safely concluded that Sridharadasa knew his exact name, or he might have borrowed the same epithet from Nanyadeva's commentary;

- (i) Mahasamantadhipati Dharmavaloka
Srimana Nanyapati
- (ii) Mithileswarena
- (iii) Karnatakulbhusana
- (iv) Rajanarayana
- (v) Nripa
- (vi) Mohanmurari
- (vii) Narapati
- (viii) Maithilendra
- (ix) Sangramabhairava, etc.¹⁶

The epithet 'Mahasamantadhipati' indicates that Nanyadeva was a feudatory chief before assuming the royal power in Mithila. But it is difficult to say whether he was a Samanta under the Chalukya ruler or the Palas. It is also unnecessary to hazard any conjecture in this connection. This much is apparent that he was such a powerful Samanta that he did not care to mention the name of the master under whom he served. His status and position may be compared with a powerful Nawab of the later Moghul times where the Nawabs did not care to mention their masters. Nanyadeva established his capital at Simaraongarh which is to be identified with Simaramapur of the *Kriyaratnakara*. Whatever might have been his position, it cannot be denied that he succeeded in carving out an organized kingdom in Mithila which was destined to play a very important part in the history of north-eastern

India. Nanyadeva did not interfere in the affairs of others and at the same time did not consider it prudent to dabble into contemporary politics. He successfully maintained the individuality of Mithila and confined his own ambitions to a limited purpose. He pursued the policy of golden mean and distinguished himself in peace and war. His important contemporaries were (A) Ramapala and Madanapala of the Pala dynasty (B) Vijayasena of the Sena dynasty (C) Govindachanda Gahadawala of Kanauj (D) Raghava of Kalinga¹⁷ and (E) Magadhadhipati Pithipatih.¹⁸ Magadhadhipati Pithipatih is said to have waged a war against Nanyadeva.¹⁹

Except the Pala kingdom, all other kingdoms were newly established and contemporaneous with the Karnatas of Mithila. A critical look at the then map of northern India would prove that Nanyadeva's kingdom was vulnerable to attack from all sides, but it was his excellent diplomatic skill which was responsible for the safety of Mithila from any aggressive designs of the neighbours. He was never very ambitious and believed in consolidating what he possessed than to capture other kingdoms. Those were the days of power politics and adventures, but he kept himself aloof diplomatically and constantly followed the policy of golden mean. Like the French monarch Louis Phillipe, Nanyadeva failed to satisfy anybody by his policy of golden mean, but it must be admitted that in spite of the numerous troubles that confronted him, he consolidated his kingdom to the best of his ability. We do not know of any of his successful conquest except one in Nepal.

We learn from the *Prakrita Paingalama*²⁰ that the Kalaohuri king, Karna, after defeating the Kasiraja, conquered Champaran. The statement finds support in Bheraghat inscriptions of Alhandevi. This epigraph says that Yasah Karna, having done away with the Gahadawala barrier at Kasi, reached Champaran and devastated it.²¹ K.P. Jayaswal suggests that the event took place during the reign of Nanyadeva.²²

It cannot be definitely said whether Nanyadeva was defeated or whether Champaran passed into the hands of the Chedis. It is learnt from the Bheraghat inscription that though Yasah Karna succeeded in ravaging Champaran, he could not establish his supremacy in the region. The event took place before

1124 A.D., the time by which the Chedis retreated from Kasi. Yasah Karna organised two campaigns in Champaran.²³ The invasion of Champaran was like a raid and did not result in the permanent occupation of the territory. It is obvious that Nanyadeva took a very serious view of this raid, and shifted his capital from Nanpur to Simaraongarh, in the district of Champaran. Possibly after the Chedi expedition, the seat of administration was shifted from Nanpur to Simaraongarh. The local traditions also confirm that shifting of the Karnata-capital.²⁴ Nanyadeva fortified Simaraongarh in a remarkable manner and planned extraordinary fortifications.²⁵ Simaraongarh continued to be the capital of the Karnatas for a considerable period. It is believed that there was an inscription on the main entrance. The strategic importance of the capital was doubled after the victory of Nanyadeva in Nepal.

Nanyadeva is depicted as having vanquished the heroes of Sauvira and Malwa. He is credited with having shattered the reputation of those two contemporaries. It is likely that he might have defeated the king of Sauvira and Malwa, not as a ruler of Mithila, but as a feudatory chief in early life.²⁶ Our knowledge of the kings of Sauvira and Malwa is very scanty, except that Chalukya Vikramaditya VI conquered these territories in course of his campaigns. Nanyadeva seems to have taken active part in these campaigns and it is likely that ultimately he got the glories of this campaign assigned to himself. It was in course of these fruitful campaigns that he possibly, married a Gurjara lady.²⁷ The use of yet another epithet "Mithileswarena" is indicative of the fact that he, with a view to "deluge the general mass...put on the mantle of the hallow of imperial glory and dignity."²⁸ R.C. Mazumdar has rightly pointed out, "it is impossible to believe that as a ruler of Mithila he could have carried his arms so far to the West".²⁹

Nanyadeva claims to have borken the powers of the Vangas and the Gaudas. At the time of the establishment of the Karnata dynasty of Mithila, Bengal was passing through a period of crisis and naturally every ambitious king was trying to fish in the troubled waters of the province. The whole of eastern India was in a process of political distintegration. The suppression of the Kaivartas in Bengal by Ramapala was not peaceful.

East Bengal went under the possession of the Varmanas. The Senas had established themselves in Radha. Nanyadeva, after having successfully settled in Mithila, turned his attention towards Gauda, viz. north and east Bengal. In Gauda, Nanyadeva probably came into conflict with Kumarapala and in Vanga with Yadav ruler Harivarmana.³⁰ Far more important than the southern Chola and Chalukya invasion of Bengal, was the establishment of the Karnata dynasty in Mithila and Bengal. Nanyadeva of Mithila proved a very formidable foe of Bengal. He came into conflict with Vijayasena either before or after his victory over Ramapala. He could not have established his kingdom in Mithila without coming into conflict with Ramapala; and it was as a result of this conflict that he could make Mithila independent.³¹ The boastings of Someswara³² III (1127-1138 A.D.), Vijjalla (1145-1167 A.D.) and his son Soma about having conquered the kings of Nepal, Andhra, Dravida, Magadha and Kalinga³³ simply indicate that they took credit of what was done by the Karanata chiefs in these regions as they paid nominal homage to their distant overlords. There were sufficient reasons for conflict between the Senas of Bengal and the Karnatas of Mithila. Both of them coveted the same territory in Bengal, and it appears that at first the two Karnata chiefs combined their efforts in the initial stages but fell out over the spoils which ultimately went to Vijayasena.

According to R.C. Mazumdar, Nanyadeva might have obtained some initial successes both against the Palas and the Senas but was ultimately defeated by Vijayasena of Vanga and fell on his dominion of Mithila.³⁴ He is further of the opinion that Vijayasena subjugated Mithila but such belief is highly improbable in view of the fact that the very authenticity of the *Laksmanasamvat* is doubtful. There is no direct or indirect positive evidence to suggest finally that the Sena conquest of Mithila was a reality. It is true that the Deopara inscription refers to Nanyadeva as being defeated here.³⁵ Verse numbers 20, 21, and 22 of the said epigraph may be interpreted to mean that Vijayasena first vanquished the kings of Gauda, Kamarupa and Kalinga and then proceeded against Nanyadeva and Vira. Verse number 21 reproduces a conversation that is imagined by

the poet to have taken place between them during their imprisonment, in course of which the non-effectiveness of their arms was discussed. But Ballalasena's inscriptions do not refer to waging of any campaign against Mithila. The expeditions referred to in the traditions may have been the same as was undertaken by his father. The problem of Sena invasion of Mithila is yet an enigma in the history of north-eastern India. The Deopara inscription simply furnishes the information of the defeat of Nanyadeva. Vijayasena is said to have led an expedition against west along the course of the Ganga, most probably against Govindachanda of Kanauj. Most likely it was in course on this expedition that Vijayasena invaded Mithila and inflicted a defeat on Nanyadeva.³⁶

H.C. Ray interpreting the relevant verses (22-24) of the Deopara inscriptions suggests that Vijayasena crossed the river Nagar and came into conflict with the chief of Mithila. It was possibly in course of this campaign that the Bengal chief organized a naval expedition against the western region,³⁷ which "may not have been entirely unconnected with the Gahadawalas."³⁸ The naval expedition seems to be an auxiliary to the infantry. The fleet sailed westward beyond Rajmahal. It is not possible to hazard a conjecture as to when the fleet was despatched and as there were three different rulers in Bihar viz., Govindachanda, Madanapala and Nanyadeva—it is not known against whom the fleet was sent. As the Deopara inscription has not specifically mentioned about the victorious achievements Vijayasena's fleet in the west, it is natural to conclude that the western expedition of Vijayasena was not very successful.

According to Mithila traditions, Ballalasena at the instance of his father invaded Mithila and imprisoned Nanyadeva in the fort of Gandeswara (on the borders of modern Supaul and Darbhanga).³⁹ In recognition of his meritorious services Ballalasena was adorned with the title of "Nisankha-Sankara."⁴⁰ It is further learnt that Gangadeva, after liberating his father from the Sena detention, restored the area and changed the name of Nisankhpur and named it Gangapur Rajni, (after his own name), which is still a village in the pargana Nisankhpur-kurha in the district of Saharsa.⁴¹ In the Madhainagar

grant of Laksmanasena, Ballalasena is described as "Ariraja Nisankha Sankara." It was during the course of his expedition of Mithila that Ballalasena seems to have displayed his military talents.⁴² It is also believed that pargana Nisankhpur-kurha in the Madhipura subdivision of the district of Saharsa was the Sena administrative centre.⁴³ It is also evident from the later literary sources that Ballalasena invaded Mithila during the reign of his father and his kingdom was composed of Vanga, Radha, Vagdi, Varendra and Mithila.⁴⁴ *Laghubharata* a later work, states that Ballala received the news of the birth of Laksmanasena while he was marching against Mithila. If there is any authenticity in the statement, Laksamana was obviously born after the death of Ramapala in 1120 A.D., when alone Ballalasena could have led an expedition against Mithila. It was on the basis of this passage in *Laghubharata* (chapter 2 p. 140) that Nagendra Nath Basu suggests that Ballalasena organised an expedition of Mithila. On the basis of *Ballalacharita*,⁴⁵ it has been pointed out that he (Ballala) led an expedition against Mithila, and R.C. Mazumdar believes that the Sena domination of Mithila is indirectly supported by the obscurity in the history of Mithila after Nanyadeva (a point which now does not stand in view of modern researches) and its association with the *Laksmanasamvat-era*.⁴⁶ In the same manner R.C. Mazumdar further observes, "Ballalasena's expedition against Mithila is supported by other traditions and historical facts;"⁴⁷ but surprisingly enough he does not mention any example of these historical facts. R.C. Mazumdar again contradicts himself by saying that "it is very difficult to say how far these traditions correspond to real facts."⁴⁸

We have to bear in mind that Ballalasena's inscriptions do not refer to any campaign against Mithila. The fact regarding the defeat of Nanyadeva and his consequent arrest by Vijayasena is substantiated by the Deopara inscription, the Mithila tradition and the evidence of Mulla Taqia. Other evidences are of a later date and cannot be thoroughly relied upon. In view of the present state of our knowledge, although we cannot reject outright the fact relating to the defeat of Nanyadeva and his detention, yet it is doubtful if Mithila was at any time under the control of the Senas. G.M. Sarkar

asserts that "Vijayasena must have conquered north Bengal and Tirhut by 1120 A.D."⁴⁹ The tradition of Mithila is insistent on the point that Gangadeva organised a powerful force and recovered the kingdom from the Senas. There is no problem of any obscurity in the history of Mithila after Nanyadeva as R.C. Mazumdar wants us to believe,⁵⁰ specially in view of his own contradictory statements. Even the Deopara inscription does not specifically imply any territorial expansion of the Sena power in the region of Tirhut; even though a serious defeat seems to have been inflicted upon Nanyadeva.⁵¹

In this connection, it may be asserted that the most sober view is held by D.C. Sircar. He observes, "it is difficult to believe that Vijayasena had any appreciable success against Nanyadeva whose successors were ruling over Mithila for a long time to come."⁵² The discovery and the interpretation of the Sanokhar inscription of Ballalasena of 1166 A.D., establishes the fact that Ballalasena extended his authority upto Sanokhar region of Bhagalpur on the south of the Ganga. But the existence of a strong Gahadawala power in the west stood in the way of the Sena expansion. Sanokhar might have been the eastern boundary of the Sena power in Bihar. Possibly the Senas controlled a little portion of the area known as Moranga: that is, north-eastern Purnea extending upto the borders of Jalpaiguri in Bengal. Veerabundh was the dividing line between the Senas of Bengal and the Karnatas of Mithila⁵³ In verse number 10 of the Barrackpur grant of Vijayasena,⁵⁴ we find Vijayasena's wife offering gifts. This grant is made in Pundravardhanbhukti to a Brahmana Samanta Udayakaradeva in honour of Maheswara Bhattaraka.⁵⁵ Pundravardhanbhukti and Tirabhukti were co-terminus and a portion of Pundravardhanbhukti also lay in the district of Purnea in north Bihar. It was on account of the Sena occupation of Pundravardhanbhukti that the Sena possibly claimed Mithila as one of their provinces. The concept of Mithila being one of the five provinces of the Sena kingdom is erroneously based on this view. It is difficult to agree with the view that the kingdom of Ballalasena extended upto Mithila in the west (*DHNI-I*. p. 364) in view of the modern researches. As soon as the sceptre of Gahadawala power was withdrawn, the Senas might have planted their "pillars of victories"

at Kasi and Prayaga. All these evidences prove that Nanyadeva maintained himself successfully against the onslaughts of the Senas and continued to rule as an independent king of Tirhut and his dynasty held the sway for a much longer period than the Senas.

K.P. Jayaswal is of the opinion that Nanyadeva had friendly relationship with Gahadawalas. According to him the Palas, the Karnatas and the Gahadawalas joined in a confederacy against the rising power of the Senas.⁵⁶ Jayaswal very clearly opines that according to *Kalpataru*, written by the foreign minister of Govindachanda, it is evident that Malladeva of the Karnata dynasty served under Jayachanda Gahadawala; and that relationship between the Gahadawalas and the Karnatas of Mithila was one of cordiality. Another relevant point suggested in this connection is that Govindachanda Gahadawala expanded his kingdom upto Monghyr and there was a struggle between the Gahadawalas and the Senas⁵⁸ in which the latter were driven away. As a matter of fact Monghyr passed into the hands of Gahadawalas⁵⁹ and even in Bengal the prestige of the Senas was at the lowest ebb. Madanpala possibly held only a negligible portion of south Bihar and he had only a success of temporary nature over the Gahadawalas. The Valgudar inscription of Madanpala, dated 1161 A.D., shows that the Krimila Visaya between Monghyr and Patna was under the Palas.⁶⁰ The Prakrita-Paingalama suggests that the King of Kasi fought successfully with the King of Gauda, Vanga, Kalinga, Telanga, Maharastra, Saurashtra, Champaran, Nepal, Bhutan, China and Lohavara.⁶¹

This literary evidence gives an idea of the fact that the Gahadawalas were not on cordial terms with contemporaries in Vanga, Gauda, Champaran, and Nepal, that is, the Senas, the Palas and the Karnatas.

Analysed in this background, it can be suggested that the king of west against whom Vijayasena made an advance through the upper course of the Ganga was in all probability Govindachanda. If we accept that Nanyadeva actually invaded Malwa, it has got to be accepted that he forced his way through the territory of Govindachanda Gahadawala. We cannot be absolutely sure of this event and at the same time it has to be

borne in mind that Govindachanda not only fought against the kings of Gauda, Muslims of Lahore, Chalukya Someswara III but he also came into conflict with Vijayasena, Anantavarman of Kalinga, Nanyadeva of Mithila and the Parmaras of Malwa.⁶² There is no authentic evidence to substantiate an alliance between the Gahadawalas and the Karnatas. Nanyadeva was the immediate rising neighbour of the Gahadawals and there is a probability of clash having taken place between the two kingdoms. It is very likely that Govindachanda had to enter into conflict with the Palas, the Senas, the Gangas, the Kaktiyas, the Chalukyas, the Chandelas and the Karnatas of Mithila.⁶³ Here, the Gahadawala-invasion of Champaran is very important point to be reckoned with; and it might have occurred in the wake of the Kalachuri invasion in the same area. We get the information from the Kalha inscription of Sodhadeva dated Vikrama Samvata 1135 corresponding to early 1079 A.D. that Sodhadeva had declared himself independent in the Gorakhpur region and extended his territory upto Saran in north Bihar.⁶⁴ The Lucknow Museum plate of Kirtipaladeva dated V.S. 1167, corresponding to 1111 A.D. shows that the north-eastern portion of Gorakhpur (bordering Motihari in north Bihar) lay outside the Gahadawala dominion. The inscription refers to the grant of two villages in the "Darada Gandaki Desa"⁶⁵ by Kirtipala. The land mentioned in the inscription possibly lay in between hilly-region of mountains extending upto Gandaki.⁶⁶ Most probably on the north-east, river Gandak was the indication of the boundary of the Gahadawalas and after that area began the Karnata territory of Mithila.⁶⁷

In face of the arguments mentioned above, it is not at all possible to accept the theory of K.P. Jayaswal that Nanyadeva and his Gahadawala-contemporary were friendly with each other. Any concrete evidence of any alliance between the two dynasties is conspicuous by its absence.⁶⁸ Even Mithila-traditions do not refer to any contact between Nanyadeva and the Gahadawalas. It is possible that if Nanyadeva would have maintained a balance of power between the Senas and the Gahadawalas, he could have embarked on an aggressive policy. It would be more plausible to accept that Nanyadeva was

satisfied with his own fortunes in Tirhut⁶⁹ and he sought his compensation in the valley of Nepal. It is obvious in the light of contemporary political situation.

Connection between Mithila and Nepal has existed since time immemorial. Mithila lay en route to Nepal. The decline of the Pala authority was followed by a period about which there is no authentic information. We have already discussed how Vikramaditya VI is credited with having placed his feet upon the heads of the kings of Andhra, Dravida and Nepal.⁷⁰ The Pattadakal inscription of 1162 A.D. refers to Nepal among the vassals of the Chalukya king Somesvara III.⁷¹ This evidence gives us the basis to conclude that all was not well with Nepal which was passing through a very critical phase of her history. The internal disturbances were rampant in Nepal as the Thakuris of Nayakota and Patan were not pulling on well. The disturbances leading to the restoration of the Thakuris of Nayakota had their foundations in Mithila where the Karnatas had already established their supremacy.⁷² The absence of any full royal title on the part of Harsadeva (1082-1098 A.D.) illustrated that he did not assume such decorations. His death further started some trouble in Nepal. Nanyadeva seems to have made capital of the situation obtaining in Nepal. The later *Vamsavalis* indicate that he entered Nepal, introduced Saka era and founded his court at Bhatagaon. From Bhatagaon he ruled over Kathmandu⁷³ and Patan. One of the latest historians on Nepal, Petech, does not accept Nanyadeva as having ruled over Nepal. But on the basis of available materials, he has been compelled to admit "apparently he (Nanyadeva) did raid Nepal after the death of Harsadeva, and this was not forgotten..."⁷⁴ The colophon of a manuscript of 1099 A.D. suggests that Ramdeva of Dhavalasrota was a "Mahasamantadhipati" in Nepal, and he is credited with having asserted independence during the time of Harsadeva. It is possible that Ramdeva, mentioned in the manuscript, might have acknowledged the supremacy of Ramapal of the Pala dynasty, prior to the emergence of Nanyadeva. This fact is corroborated by a colophon of a manuscript of *Kubjikamala*⁷⁵ which reads as "Ramdevasya - Parmeswara Paramabhattacharya Parmasaugata Maharaja Srimad Rampaladevasya." But the

present state of our knowledge about the history of Nepal does not allow us to agree with Petech that Ramdeva accepted "the overlordship of Rampala," perhaps as an insurance against any threat from Nanyadeva,⁷⁶ as the colophon does not provide us with any such indication.

The emergence of Nanyadeva's power in Mithila is said to have sounded the death knell of the Pala empire and the Pala dynasty in Nepal was replaced by the Karnatas. Ramdeva, after the decline of the Pala power, might have transferred his loyalty to Nanyadeva as his Mahasamantadhipati. Ramdeva might have been the samanta of Nanyadeva during the time of Sivadeva. (1098-1126 A.D.) Very rightly Petech is sceptical about the authenticity of his own findings in this connection. Ramapala's domination over Nepal, prior to rise of Nanyadeva is further substantiated by a hitherto unnoticed manuscript of the *Aryosnisavijaynamadharni*, brought to light by Petech (p-53).

During the time of Nanyadeva chaos and confusion prevailed in Nepal. Nanyadeva derived advantage of the situation and entered the valley. He is credited with having subdued and captured whole of Nepal, dethroned the ruling princes and consequently founded his court at Bhatagaon. According to the Nepalese tradition, Nanyadeva captured two Nepalese princes, Jagadevamalla of Patan and Anandmall of Bhatagaon. Levi is of the opinion that chronicles have blundered by introducing the Malla kings into this particular period of the history of Nepal.⁷⁷ The Malla kings of Nepal trace their descent from Nanyadeva.⁷⁸

The other theory is that Nanyadeva did not destroy the local princes in the valley. The princes continued to rule under him. It seems worthwhile to suggest that the vacuum created in Nepal after the decline of the Palas was filled in by the Karnatas. Bendall has ventured not to mention Nanyadeva where as Wright and Bhagwanlal put him to a later date.⁷⁹ There is absolutely no reason to doubt the sway of Nanyadeva over the whole valley although D.R. Regmi has refused to agree to these findings.⁸⁰ Wright mentions a conflict between the Mallas of Nepal and Nanyadeva. As Levi points out, the Mallas existed in Nepal between 700 to 1200 A.D.⁸¹ The *Vamsavalis* demonstrate that Nanyadeva defeated the Mallas

and forced them to flee to Tirhut. Petech is of the opinion that there was no Malla King in the valley in that period as the Malla-dynasty was founded by Arimalladeva in 1200 A.D.⁸² Nanyadeva did not have a peaceful time in Nepal as he had to face Thakuri prince Sivadeva who had adopted a high sounding title "Rajadhiraja Parmeswara". The circumstances through which Sivadeva was elevated to the throne is shrouded in mystery. There was, without any doubt, internal feud in the country, as Thakuris of Nayakota and Patan were fighting. The Thakuris of Nayakota got the patronage of Nanyadeva who is supposed to have put an end to the Patan family.⁸³ Nanyadeva's invasion of Nepal took place in 1119-20 A.D. Even after that the ruling princes continued to decorate themselves with imperial titles⁸⁴ in spite of their subservient status. But in view of the high sounding titles adopted by Sivadeva, one begins to doubt whether Nanyadeva could keep the whole country under his sway for a long time.⁸⁵ Sivadeva was ruling between 1118 and 1123 A.D. and it appears that Thakuris of Nayakota again regained power under his banner. It has been suggested that in the beginning Nanyadeva supported Sivadeva and influenced his power in the valley.⁸⁶ As Nanyadeva was being pressed on all sides in Tirhut, it was natural for him to turn his attention towards Nepal. For some time the Thakuris asserted independence as he was busy in consolidating his gains in Tirhut. Sivadeva was followed by Indra or Mahendra in 1128 A.D. and Manadeva came to power in 1134 A.D. If we rely on D.R. Regmi's contention, we shall have to accept that Nanyadeva came to occupy the valley in 1141 A.D.⁸⁷ It has been suggested that the internal condition of Tirhut between 1118 and 1141 A.D. arrested the attention of Nanyadeva and he had to plunge headlong in restoring order in that part of his kingdom. It was necessary, therefore, to indulge in the re-conquest of Nepal in 1141 A.D. After this period his supremacy over Nepal continued unabated.⁸⁸ Although apparently the nature of his sovereignty in Nepal is not quite clear, yet the internal disruption of Nepal was mainly responsible for the ultimate success of Nanyadeva.

ESTIMATE OF NANYADEVA

Nanyadeva is credited with having ruled for about fifty years, viz, from C. 1097 to 1147 A.D. His greatness lies not only in the fact that he was the founder of the Karnata dynasty, but also on account of the fact that he was one of the ablest kings of the dynasty. The undated Andhratharhi inscription is the only epigraphic record of Nanyadeva in the heart of Mithila. We learn, on the basis of that epigraph, that Nanyadeva was treated by his contemporaries as a Ksatriya. In the Mithila-tradition, ⁸⁹ he has been described as a Parmara (Karnata) Ksatriya of the southern origin.

He is also described as 'Lord', 'Victor' and besides his extraordinary achievements, he is said to have turned the world into "a second Kshirasagara" by his fame⁹⁰ and reputation.

Nanyadeva, whose origin is even now shrouded in mystery and obscurity, succeeded in carving out an independent state practically out of nothing. Beyond doubt he happens to be one of the most remarkable personalities and political figures of north-eastern India. With all his limitations, either political or otherwise, his achievements were by no means insignificant if we take into consideration the state of political uncertainty and storm of contemporary India. The Kingdom, conceived and created by the genius of Nanyadeva, lasted for a considerably long period and outlived almost all the contemporary dynasties. Judged from any point of view, this was not a small achievement for Nanyadeva who had very little military laurels to his credit after his accession to the throne of Mithila. It is learnt from his commentary that he married a Gurjara lady.⁹¹ He had a brother whose name was Kirtiraja, also known as Narapati. It is not definitely known as to where Narapati actually ruled. Nanyadeva's success also lies in the fact that he consolidated the kingdom efficiently and bequeathed a good heritage to his successors.

Nanyadeva was a valiant warrior and skilled diplomat. Besides, he was a great patron of art, literature and culture. He is himself renowned as one of the famous scholars of his time. His commentary on the Natyasastra of Bharata is regarded as one of the most standard works of the period

on the subject concerned. It was under his able stewardship that Mithila achieved dizzy heights of glory and once again came to the forefront of Indian history both in the spheres of politics and culture after a long gap of about fifteen hundred years. Actually this was not a mean achievement for a man who aspired and ultimately succeeded in becoming one of the notable personalities of early medieval history of north India to bring about stability in a part of Bihar in those days of political uncertainty. His dynasty continued to rule over Tirhut for about two centuries and a quarter and like their counterparts, the Karnatas also made valuable contributions to the different branches of learning and culture.

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Notes

1. *CIB* The Simaraon Inscription *History of Bihar* p. 101. ff. *TM* p. 234 ff.
2. *JASB* (N. S.) XI p. 407.
3. *Purusapariksa* edited by Chanda Jha (Darbhanga Edition) p. 19; (new edition of the *PP* has been brought out by Prof. Ramanath Jha and published by the Patna University); Cf. R. K. Choudhary's article 'The Karnatas of Mithila' in the *ABORI* XXXV. 91. *Inscription of Bihar* by R. K. Choudhary, for the text of Epigraph, R. K. Choudhary, *History of Bihar*, 101 *TM* p. 234.
4. *IHQ* III, 577 Cf. I. A. 1922.
5. *Levi*. op. cit. II, pp. 194-197 (footnotes)
6. *Purusapariksa* I, p. 3.
7. *IHQ*. VII p. 688.
8. *MD* 61, Bihari Lal. *Aini Tirhut*, pp. 10-11 Cf. Katalog Der Doutschen Morgenlandischer Garssel Schaft-Leipzig. 1881 Vol. II p. 8. Here we find the mention of a MSS which was written in 1097 A.D. during the reign of Nanyadevea. Also Cf. *IA* IX p. 414 where Nanyadeva is assigned a reign of 50 years.
9. *JBORS*. IX p. 305, *Levi* II p. 197.

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10. K. C. Pandey : *Abhinavagupta, an historical and Philosophical study.* (Benaras 1935) p. 125.
11. For traditional account Cf. *MD*, p. 61 *BMI* pp. 460-470, *MTV*, p. 97, *TM* pp. 236-238.
12. Cf. R. K. Choudhary, Photostat Copy.
13. *JBRS*, IX p. 305; *TM*, p. 295; *PIHC*, XIV; *Levi*, II p. 194.; pp. 198-199.
14. *IA*, IX, p. 188; XIII, p. 418 : *EI*, I, p. 313.
15. *JBORS*, IX pp. 304-305.
16. The colophon of the manuscript *Bharatabhasya* by Nanyadeva (MSS. No. III of 1869/70 the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Poona). Although the date of the manuscript is not recorded, the manuscript appears to be very old.
17. *ABORI*, XXXV p. 68, *PIHC*, XIV
18. *RC*, Commentary II, p. 5-6, pp. 11. 8.
19. *JBORS*, IX, p. 301.
20. *Bibliotheca Indica Series*, Calcutta, 1902, p. 296. Verse 4. Cf. R. K. Choudhury's, *Prakritapaingalama*, an important source of the *History of Mithila* Also *HCIP*, V, p. 63.
21. *EI*, II p. 2.
22. *JBORS*, IX p. 301.
23. *HCIP*, V, p. 63. Cf. R. K. Choudhory *Prakrita Paingalama*, an important source of the history of Mithila.
24. *BMI*, p. 461, *Aini-Tirhut*, p. 11.
25. *ASR*, XVI, p. 3.
26. *TM*, p. 239.
27. *IHQ*, VII, p. 685.
28. *TM*, p. 239.
29. *IHQ*, VII, p. 685.
30. *HCIP*, V, pp. 35-47.
31. *NB*, pp. 164, 65.
32. *JBBRAS*, XI, p. 268.
33. *EI*, XV, p. 315.
34. *MB*, p. 212.
35. *EI*, I, p. 305.
36. *HCIP*, V, p. 37.
37. *DHNI*, I, p. 360.

38. *Ibid.*, I, p. 330.
39. *MTV*, pp. 100-101.
40. *Ibid.*, pp. 98, 101.
41. *ABORI*, XXXV, p. 95 fn. 1.
42. *HCIP*, V, p. 37.
43. *HAIB*, p. 473.
44. *ABORI*, XXXV, p. 95.
45. *Ballalacharita* (Edited by H.P. Sastri, A.S.B. Calcutta 1964, p. 16.
46. *MB*, p. 216.
47. *MB*, p. 241.
48. *Ibid.* p. 216. How a reputed historian of his eminence has contradicted himself is evident from the above two quotations.
49. *JDL*, XVI, p. 72.
50. *IHQ*, XXX, p. 209.
51. *JBORS*, XXV, p. 133.
52. *IHQ*, XXX, p. 210.
53. *Bhagalpur Gazetteer*, p. 40.
54. *EI*, XV, pp. 278, 286.
55. *Ibid.*
56. *JBORS*, X, pp. 44, 46.
57. *PB*, p. 103.
58. *JBORS*, IX, pp. 309-10.
59. *EI*, VII, pp. 98-99.
60. *JASB*, (L) XVII, p. 29.
61. *EI*, XXVII, p. 142.
62. *IHQ*, XI, p. 567.
63. *HCIP*, V, p. 53.
64. *EI*, VII, p. 85, 93; *DHNI*, II, p. 747.
65. *EI*, VII, p. 93 ff.
66. *JNSI*, X, p. 72, 74.
67. R.K. Choudhury: *History of Bihar*, p. 101, ff.
68. *T.K.* pp. 299-322. The question of Malladeva serving under Jayachanda does not stand historically verified. R.S. Tripathi has taken all evidence into consideration but he does not attach any importance to this story.
69. *Levi*, II, pp. 205-19. *IHQ*, VII, p. 689. *DHNI*, I, p. 206.

70. *JBBRAS.* XI. p. 268. *IHQ.* VII. p. 683.
71. *IHQ.* VII. p. 682, XXX pp. 208-209 *QJMS.* XLV. I ff. *T.M.* p. 233 ff.
72. *ABORI.* XXXV. p. 93 ff.
73. D.W. Wright : *History of Nepal.* p. 167.
74. Luciano Petech. *Medieval History of Nepal.* p. 53 ff.
75. H.P. Sastri : *Nepal Catalogue.* pp. 1-54.
76. Petech. p. 54.
77. *Levi.* II. p. 199 ff. *DHNI.* I. pp. 203-204.
78. *ABORI.* (Silver Jubilee Volume) 1942, p. 299. Cf. Pratapmalla Inscription.
79. *El.* I. p. 305; *JASB.* V. p. 407, XI. p. 411; *DHNI.* II. p. 358. *JBORS.* IX, p. 302, XXII. p. 256; *IA.* IX. p. 188. XIII. p. 418, *Levi.* II. p. 199. *TM.* p. 233, *ABORI.* 1942, p. 299, R.D. Banerjee. *Bangalar Itihasa* Volume, I. p. 318; *ABORI.* XXV p. 97 ff.
80. D.R. Regmi : *Medieval Nepal.*
81. *Levi.* II. pp. 212-13.
82. Petech. pp. 52, 81.
83. *PIHC.* X. pp. 250-52.
84. *ABORI.* XXXV. p. 98.
85. *HCIP.* V. p. 47.
86. *TM.* p. 251 : According to some scholars the assumption of the imperial title by Sivadeva in 1120 A.D. shows that Nanyadeva was killed before that date Cf. *JASB.* 1921 p. 4. The assumption is completely vague and wrong.
87. D.R. Regmi : *Ancient and Medieval Nepal.* (1st Edn.) p. 145. D.R. Regmi has since changed his views and he now does not accept the theory of Karnata domination over Nepal. Vide *Medieval Nepal*, part. I.
88. *JIH* ; XXXVI. pp. 123-125.
89. *MTV.* 97. Cf. *MD.* *TM.* *BMI*, for traditional stories current about Nanyadeva.
90. *JBORS.* IX. p. 303 Cf. R.K. Choudhury : *Inscriptions of Bihar*, *G.D.C. Bulletin* No. 4.
91. *JAHS.* I. p. 57.

Successors of Nanyadeva

MALLADEVA

Nanyadeva had two sons namely, Malladeva and Gangadeva. Scholars consider Malladeva to be forgotten king of Mithila.¹ In view of the evidence in the *Purusapariksa* about Malladeva, doubts have been naturally raised about the question of succession after Nanyadeva. Malladeva is described as the heir apparent but in the chronological scheme of the Mithila tradition and Nepal *Vamsavalis*, Gangadeva comes after Nanyadeva. Whether there was any struggle for succession or not, we are not in a position to state, but the Bheet Bhagwanpur inscription raises a pertinent question about Malladeva and hence it is imperative on our part to examine the evidence. In view of the Bheet Bhagwanpur inscription, which reads "Om Sri Malladevasya," it has been concluded that Bheet Bhagwanpur was the capital of Malladeva. The Gandhawariya Rajputs of Tirhut trace their descent from Malladeva. Even the ruins of Bheet Bhagwanpur, still unexcavated and practically unnoticed, are similar to the Karnata tradition of blackstone and bear marked resemblance with the architecture of the twelfth century A.D. The inscription also bears similarity to the palaeography of the same century. According to Vidyapati, Malladeva was a valiant warrior.²

He is also known as "Pratimalla" and heir apparent of Nanyadeva according to *Puruspariksa*.

Addressing him as a valiant hero, Vidyapati, also appreciates his independent attitude of mind.³ Only because Malladeva was a man of independent bent of mind he left his kingdom to make out his independent existence elsewhere. After the death of Nanyadeva he seems to have become the ruler of Mithila which is corroborated by facts. He is credited with having shifted to the court of Jayachanda, the king of Kanauj. But it is said that on account of his quarrelsome nature, Malladeva could not stay there for long. As he picked up quarrel with the Gahadawalas, he had to leave the court for good. Jayachanda addressed Malladeva as a "Supreme Scion of the Karnata race." Malladeva left Kanauj and went to the Chikkora King of Pithi.⁴ The Chikkoras played a significant role in the history of north-eastern India. Pithi was an independent kingdom.⁵ There existed a cordial relationship between the Gahadawalas and the Chikkoras. The Chikkora princess Kumardevi was given in marriage to Govindachanda Gahadawala. According to Vidyapati, the Chikkoras were not in a position to measure arms with such a mighty monarch as Jayachanda of Kasi. Malladeva was annoyed with the Gahadawalas and it was on account of him that a struggle between the Chikkoras and the Gahadawalas ensued.

Tradition asserts that one Nanyadeva's sons ruled in Nepal.⁶ It is very likely that Gangadeva ruled in Mithila, while the other son, Malladeva, ruled over Nepal. Narasimhadeva had developed differences with his kinsmen and as a result of that Mithila and Nepal were separated. The possibility of this division of the kingdom of Nanyadeva cannot be ruled out or rejected. It is likely that Gangadeva ruled over certain portion of Mithila and from there he extended his authority upto Bengal, while Malladeva ruled over the north-eastern portion of Mithila and the Terain area of Nepal. Malladeva made Bheet Bhagwanpur his capital. Gangadeva and Malladeva could not pull on well.⁷ A local tradition asserts that one Vardhamana Upadhyaya was patronised by Malladeva. Vardhamana, the distinguished writer on *Smriti*, is said to have flourished between 1150 and 1250 A.D.⁸ and has referred to a "Karnatalalana"

in his writings. Popular traditions are supported by certain names of villages still commemorating the name of Malladeva. Maldiha, a village on the border of Purnea and Saharsa districts, and Malhad in the Supaul sub-division are credited with having been established by Malladeva. The numerous ruins of these villages were washed away by the Kosi floods in the thirties and forties of the present century. In the present stage of our knowledge, it is rather difficult to say anything for certain only on the basis a solitary epigraphic evidence.⁹ In future, further archaeological excavations may throw some welcome-light on the authenticity of Malladeva as a ruler of Mithila.

The problem 'Did Malladeva actually rule over Mithila?' is still open for hazarding a reasonable guess. We have no direct evidence to show the reign period of Malladeva in Mithila though K.R. Kanungo¹⁰ has confused the issue by bringing one Arimalladeva as a Karnata ruler of Mithila after Nanyadeva. Arimalladeva was a ruler of Nepal and not of Mithila. He did not belong to the Karnata dynasty and he had no sway over any part of Tirhut. Further, by no stretch of imagination, we can identify Arimalladeva with Malladeva (son of Nanyadeva) of Mithila, whose historicity is still shrouded in obscurity and the truth about the Bheet Bhagwanpur ruins yet await explanation. Until further evidence is forthcoming it would not be proper to hazard any guess with regard to Malladeva who, in popular tradition, is said to have ruled over a portion of Mithila after Nanyadeva.

GANGADEVA : (1147 to 1188 A.D.)

The colophon of a Ramayana manuscript refers to one Gangeyadeva of Tirabhukti about whose identity there has been a lot of discussion since it first came to light. Bendall, Levi, R.P. Chanda, K.P. Jayaswal, V.V. Mirasi, R.C. Mazumdar, R.K. Choudhury and others have discussed the veracity of the manuscript and most of the scholars have come to the conclusion that Gangeyadeva was Gangadeva of Mithila. The discussion centres round the moot point of identifying *Garudadhwa* (first manuscript) and *Gaudadhwa* (second manuscript). Since there are two considered lines of thinking

regarding the problem viz. (i) Gangeyadeva identified with Kalachuri King (V. V. Mirasi and others); and (ii) Gangeyadeva identified with Gangadeva of Mithila (R.C. Mazumdar and R.K. Choudhury),¹¹ I have followed the second contention and have accepted the fact that Gangeyadeva is to be identified with the son of Nanyadeva. Gangadeva was a powerful king and his achievements stand confirmed from the facts. A reassessment seems to be necessary.

The Pratapamalla inscription of Nepal shows that Gangadeva succeeded Nanyadeva in 1147 A.D. Gangadeva is considered to be a very brave king. He is also credited with having avenged the Palas and the Senas. He was a contemporary of Madanpala and probably attacked his kingdom with success.¹² It was on account of internal disruption and external onslaughts that the Pala kingdom crumbled. From the Manhali copperplate, it is interpreted that at least a considerable portion of north Bengal was under Madanpala upto the eighth year of his reign. The Jayanagar inscription shows that in the fourteenth year of his reign, he ruled over the southern part of the district of Monghyr and this assertion is further supported by the Valgudar inscription of Madanpala. This inscription shows that Madanpala ruled upto 1161 A.D. The *Ramacharita* (IV. 27) of Sandhyakara Nandi refers to an invasion of Gauda by the Karnata rulers of Mithila. Nanyadeva claimed to have broken the powers of Vanga and Gauda and Gangadeva also claimed some political authority in Gauda.

Gangadeva was positively a contemporary of Madanpala and attacked his kingdom in north Bengal successfully. Gangadeva has been rightly hailed as "Gaudadhwa" in the colophon of a Ramayana manuscript. After the demise of Madanpala, the Pala rulers had ceased to exercise any suzerainty in western, eastern and southern Bengal. In the Sena dynasty, Ballalasena was a contemporary of Gangadeva. The general belief is that during the regime of powerful Ballalasena, no province of Sena rule was captured by any other king. But on the basis of the different sources, with the solitary exception of *Ballalacharita*, we learn that Ballalasena did not lead any independent campaign against Mithila during his own rule. There is no positive evidence at our disposal to prove that

Ballalasena and Gangadeva came into conflict. The village Gangapur Rajni in the sub-division of Madhipura in the district of Saharsa still remains to remind us that Gangadeva definitely ruled in this region. Even during the life-time of his father, Nanyadeva, Gangadeva is said to have defeated the Senas, and consequently pushed them eastwards.

If we take into account the hold of the Senas on Mithila, it can be asserted with certainty that the same must have been confined upto the Moranga region. The mention of Mithila in the Sena literary records should mean simply Moranga and nothing more than that. The concept of 'Pancha-Gauda' is a traditional thing, and all rulers of Bengal continued to adore themselves with these epithets simply to make an external show of their prestige. The literary evidence is of a later date and hence cannot be regarded as the sole authoritative and historical evidence. The contemporary political situation was also not in favour of Ballalasena's unplanned adventure in the realm of power-politics. The Gahadawalas under Govindachanda had advanced upto Monghyr and their retreat was immediately followed by the re-establishment of the Pala authority under Madanpala as is corroborated by the Valgudar inscription of the same king. Under the circumstances, Ballalasena was not in a position to carry on imperialistic expansion in or against Mithila. On the other hand, Ballalasena was pushed into defensive in view of the rising power of the contemporary kings.

It is not possible to agree with Thakur's assertion that "Gangadeva's suzerainty over Nepal was just a loose sort of sovereignty...he exacted tributes and often influenced the political activities thereof."¹³ We have accepted that Malladeva was ruling over the Terain area and Gangadeva was ruling over Tirhut. Anantadeva (1136-1166 A.D.) Rudradeva, Mitradeva (Wright) or Amitadeva (Bendall) were the contemporary rulers of Nepal during the time of Gangadeva. The history of Nepal was then in a process of political disintegration which is substantiated by the Pattakadal inscription of 1162 A.D. which mentions Nepal as a vassal of Chalukya king Someswara III. In an inscription of 1200 A.D. Kalachuri king Bijjala is praised for having upset the stability of Nepal.¹⁴ The Manglai inscription represents Yadava Jaitungi as having defeated the chiefs of

the armies of Nepal. In view of these facts and also the discovery of five manuscripts, representing the restoration of the Thakuri line, it may be concluded that the authorities of the Karnatas had been reduced to nonentity and that the Thakuris had asserted their independence.

It has been established accordingly that the division of the Karnata line in Mithila had virtually enabled Nepal to assert its independence during the regime of Gangadeva though Malladeva could succeed in keeping his dominance over a part of Nepal in the Terain area. Presumably Malladeva ruled over such a territory of Nepal as lay in continuity with the eastern portion of Tirhut. The Mallas of Nepal had also established their power before and after Nanyadeva and Levi considers the existence of such a dynasty as not wholly improbable.⁵

Mention has been made of Gangadeva in the Andhratharahi inscription but there is very scanty or almost no positive material to substantiate something of the time of his regime. Even his period of reign is clouded in obscurity. Sridharadasa was a minister of Gangadeva and according to his minister the reign of Gangadeva was peaceful as compared to the regime of his father. On account of the advance of the Gahadawalas, the Senas could not be a menace and further they had the danger of Muslim invaders. As stated, when all contemporary powers seem to have been faced with internal and external troubles, Mithila remained comparatively peaceful under Gangadeva.

Gangadeva successfully carried on certain important administrative reforms in his kingdom. These reforms were of immense help to him in consolidating the Karnata dominion. He has been credited with the idea of introducing the system of Parganas or the fiscal divisions for the purpose of revenue administration. In each paragana, a Chaudhary or headman was appointed for the collection of revenue. A Panchayati system on the basis of election was also established to settle all types of disputes. For the welfare of his subjects, he got dug many tanks and erected several large temples. Even now three tanks bearing his name are available. Tradition credits him as a builder of a big fort at Andhratharahi. Mulla-Taqia points out that Gangadeva shifted his capital to Darbhanga. Although

Simraongarh continued to be the main capital, yet several other towns were converted into temporary capitals and Darbhanga was one of them. While Nanyadeva conquered and consolidated, it was left to Gangadeva to put the newly built kingdom on sound footing.¹⁶ In the present state of our knowledge it can be safely concluded that this Gangadeva of *Tirabhukti* was the same as Gangeydeva. This has been confirmed by the views of a number of historians.

Notes

1. *ABORI XXXV*, pp. 98-102.
2. *Purusapariksa* I, p. 3.
3. *ABORI XXV*, pp. 99-100.
4. *PB*, p. 86.
5. *ABORI XXXV*, p. 99.
6. *Ibid.*
7. *MTV III*.
8. *MTV* p. 112. Vardhamana is said to serving have been under Malladeva. The inscription at Hati is ascribed to him. Cf. R.K. Choudhary—Inscriptions of Bihar, Cf. R.K. Choudhury. *The Later Karnatas of Mithila*.
9. *ABORI XXXV*, p. 102.
10. History of Bengal II, pp. 22-27. Cf. R.K. Choudhury *Mithilaka-Rajnitik Itihasa*.
11. *ABORI XXXV*, pp. 103-106 *T.M.*, pp. 215-218.
12. *MB* p. 170.
13. *TM* p. 257 ff.
14. Inscriptions already referred to earlier.
15. Nepal II.
16. Cf. *MTV MD*; *Mulla Taqia's account*.

Political History Of Mithila (1188—1285)

NARASIMHADEVA (1188 to 1227 A.D.)

After the death of Gangadeva in 1188 A.D. Narasimhadeva ascended the throne of Mithila. Many scholars seem to have wrong notion about Narasimhadeva as they have confused him with Nrisimhadeva of Ramdatta's *Danapaddhati*. Ramadatta was the son of Ganeswara, the author of *Sugatisopana*. Nrisimhadeva of *Danapaddhati*-manuscript was different from Narasimhadeva, the third ruler of the Karnata dynasty. It seems more probable that Nrisimhadeva mentioned in the *Danapaddhati*, who has been addressed as 'Srimana' and as also 'Karnatanavya-bhusana' (the crest-jewel of the Karnatas), might have been a local ruler of this dynasty after the fall of Harisimhadeva.¹ It has been accepted without doubt that Nrisimhadeva mentioned in the *Danapaddhati* was of the Karnata origin as is evident from the epithet "Karnatanavy-abhusan." The observations of Manmohan Chakravarty in this context are very apt and appropriate. It is highly probable that after Harisimhadeva's departure, Nrisimhadeva, who should be rightly designated as Nrisimhadeva II occupied a small territory of the Karnata dynasty; and hence there is no

scope for further controversy on the point. Thakur seems to have confused the issue with regard to this king so far as chronological sequence is concerned. Ramdatta was the minister of Nrisimhadeva II and as such he could not have been the minister of the third ruler of Karnata dynasty, Narasimhadeva. Ramdatta was a contemporary of Chandeswara.

Vidyapati's *Purusapariksa* throws some light on Narasimhadeva. In tale 4 of the *Purusapariksa* Vidyapati refers to a march of Delhi Sultan. In this march against the enemy the Sultan was helped by the two young princes namely Narasimhadeva of the Karnata dynasty and Chachikadeva Chauhan. Grierson has accepted that Sultan was Mohammad-bin-Tughluq² and at the same time he (Grierson) identifies Narasimhadeva as the grandson of Nanyadeva, the founder of the Karnata dynasty. This seems to be an erroneous idea. How can a grandson of Nanyadeva be contemporary of Muhammad-bin-Tughluq? Manmohan Chakravarty has accepted the interpretation suggested by Grierson and later writers have simply endorsed the same view. Thakur does not seem to have properly analysed the issue and hence his conclusions are doubtful and at times contradictory in nature. His doubt and confusion can be removed by pointing out that Muslim expansion was not the root of the problem there. The services rendered by Narasimhadeva to Delhi Sultan may be a kind of friendly gesture and goodwill and in no case a sign of surveillance.³ Muhammad of *Purusapriksha* is to be identified with Shahabuddin Mohammad Ghori. That Narasimhadeva used to visit Kanauj with his uncle Malladeva finds support in the Mithila-tradition. It seems that at the end of Jayachanda's rule Narasimhadeva went to Delhi and fought for Shahabuddin Mohammad Ghori.⁴ Chronology suggests that Narasimhadeva was a contemporary of Shahabuddin Mohammad Ghori and not Muhammad-bin-Tughluq as suggested by Grierson and Manmohan Chakravarty.⁵ But at the same time we have no reason to reject Vidyapati's authority outright. We have to consider that Vidyapati has depicted the history of the Karnatas of Mithila in five tales and in doing so he has laid special emphasis on the chronological sequence. The forefathers of Vidyapati had the privilege of serving under the Karnata kings in various

capacities and naturally the poet must have learnt in detail about the numerous exploits of his ancestors in the Karnata-courts. The accuracy of chronology is expected of a poet like Vidypati because he was in know of all the relevant details. In the circumstances mentioned above there can be no hesitation in accepting his contention that Shahabuddin Mohammad Ghori was the king of Hastinapore (Delhi). After inflicting a defeat on Prithwiraja, after many failures, Shahabuddin Mohammad Ghori became the master of Delhi in 1193 A.D. Chachikadeva has been known as the brother of Prithwiraja.⁶ Naturally he was also a contemporary of Shahabuddin Mohammad Ghori and is credited with having joined Ghori's camp after the defeat of his brother, Prithwiraja.⁷

According to Mulla Taqia, Narasimhadeva had been reduced to a subservient position under Laksmianasena of Bengal. The position of the Karnata Kingdom under Narasimhadeva had become very insecure and weak as it was sandwiched between the two powerful Kingdoms of Gauda and Lakhnauti.⁸ It is possible that the Karnata chief paid some direct or indirect tributes to some Muslim rulers, but by following the *Vetasiyritti* became successful in maintaining the independence of Mithila, although the size of the kingdom was reduced to a great extent. A portion of Purnea went out of his control. His kingdom deserved an apt comparison with a supplecane bending under pressure and becoming straight again.⁹

In Nepal, Narasimhadeva had quarrels with his kinsmen and as a consequence of this Mithila and Nepal were separated.¹⁰ The authenticity of this fact has not been verified on the basis of any sound evidence. During the period ranging between 1187 to 1227 A.D., we find the following names of the rulers of Nepal :—

- (i) Gunakamadeva II (1187 A.D.)
- (ii) Laksmikamadeva (1193 A.D.)
- (iii) Vijayakamadeva (1196-97 A.D.)
- (iv) Arimalladeva, founder of the Malla dynasty (1221 A.D.)
- (v) Abhayamalla (1223-52 A.D.)

It is doubtful whether these rulers of Nepal Valley accepted the suzerainty of the Karnatas of Mithila. By that time Malla dynasty was not very powerful in Nepal. The Nilgriva pillar inscription suggests that Dharmamalla and Rupamalla were the forefathers of the Mallas of Nepal.¹¹ Arimalladeva was the most important and powerful ruler of this dynasty and is stated to have ruled over Nepal between 1201-1216 A.D. He was a contemporary of Narasimhadeva of Mithila.¹² We have no definite knowledge of the Mallas having any relationship with the founder of the Karnata dynasty. In the present state of our knowledge we can safely conclude that Nepal under the Mallas, specially Arimalladeva, severed relationship with Tirhut. This fact is also supported by the fact that Chandeswara, the great minister of Harisimhadeva, embarked a series of fresh conquests over Nepal. The tall talks of the great minister Chandeswara, amply prove that Nepal had freed itself from the control of the Karnatas. It is likely that some areas of the Terain were under the control of the descendants of Malladeva and they were ruling separately from the main branch.

The reign of Narasimhadeva of Mithila was barren of any event of historical significance. Mithila tradition and folklores have described him as a warrior and very brave king. But on the basis of material evidence and the minute scrutiny of events, we are compelled to draw conclusion that he was a mediocre in affairs of politics. Throughout his reign, he was confronted with immense troubles on all sides. But it must be said that he faced the situation creditably. The independent character of somewhat small and truncated Mithila was maintained by him. He also faced the onslaughts of the Muslims very shrewdly. He sought their friendship and consequently saved Mithila. He also submitted to the Muslim invaders and promised to pay them taxes and thus spared Mithila of the turmoil and humiliation which might have been faced by the parts of the kingdom on account of frequent Muslim attacks.

K.P. Jayaswal is of the opinion that by that time the texture of the political set up had undergone a big change and the prevailing circumstances were sufficient to earn the epithet of a "weak king" for Narasimhadeva. Very often the activities

of the king were suggestive of the fact that he was a mediocre in managing administrative matters and lacked political farsightedness and wisdom.

It must be said that Narasimhadeva creditably maintained the cultural traditions of his family. Many tanks were dug and huge temples were built. His two well-known ministers Ramaditya and Karmaditya also extended their helping hands to improve Mithila culturally. We learn about Karmaditya from the Tilkeswara temple inscription. This is also known as Havidih inscription.¹³ This inscription records the erection of an image of Haihattadevi at the instance of queen Saubhagya Devi. During this regime writers of Sanskrit were encouraged by the State. This period was formative in character so far as the development of Mithila-language and literature is concerned. This is undoubtedly proved by the mention of Lorika-ballads in the *Varnana Ratnakara* of Jyotirishwara. Even the script of the Havidih inscription is Maithili.¹⁴

RAMASIMHADEVA (1227-1285 A.D.)

Ramasimhadeva succeeded his father Narasimhadeva in 1227 A.D. According to a Nepal *Vamsavali*, Ramasimhadeva was born on the 8th of March 1188.¹⁵ As in case of his predecessor, there is lot of controversy about the identity of Ramasimhadeva. Manmohan Charkravarty has confused Ramasimhadeva with another king of that name of the Karnata dynasty. Bendall commits the mistake of identifying Ramasimhadeva with king Rambhadra of the Oinwara dynasty.¹⁶ There is yet another Ramasimhadeva who figures in the colophon of a manuscript of *Sudhikalpataru* and is said to have flourished in the Samvat 1446 corresponding to 1390 A.D. In this colophon he has been addressed as "Mahanripati." On account of these materials and sources, there is a confusion about the date of Ramasimhadeva. In the Nepal Durbar Catalogue, he is called 'Maharajadhiraja', 'Bhupala', 'Mithiladhipati' and in the Mithila tradition he is known as 'Bhujabalabhima' and 'Bhimaprakrama'. But *Sudhikalpataru* simply calls him as 'Mahanripati'. Scholars are right in identifying him as Ramasimhadeva of *Sudhikalpataru*¹⁷ as a Karnata chief of

Mithila but their mistake lies in scientifically establishing his chronological sequence.

The date of Ramasimhadeva stands well attested by the Tibetan traveller, Dharmaswami and hence the erroneous dates as furnished by some scholars are now untenable. On the basis of Nepalese and Mithila tradition it is apparent that Ramasimhadeva flourished between 1229 and 1291 A.D. though Manmohan Chakravarty places him two steps below Harisimhadeva.

The two Nepalese inscriptions of Pratapamalla of Nepal of the year 1648 and 1658 A.D., Ramasimhadeva has been shown as the son and successor of Narasimhadeva and a predecessor of Harisimhadeva. The *Vamsavali* records also establish the same. As a matter of fact, the confusion created by Manmohan Chakravarty was followed by all later writers without any question and hesitation. A careful study and scrutiny of all the contemporary sources reveal to us that Ramasimhadeva of *Sudhikalpataru* was a local ruling chieftain.¹⁸ This has been proved that Ramasimhadeva was the fourth in descent from Nanyadeva. It is not a fact that his exact chronological position is "uncertain due to conflicting evidence regarding his place in the family genealogy."¹⁹ The manuscript of *Sudhikalpataru* does not necessarily solve the problem concerning the chronology of Ramasimhadeva. In the present state of knowledge, we cannot change the chronological order of the Karanata kings of Mithila. Srikara addressed Ramasimhadeva as "Mithilamahendra" and Prithwidhara calls him as 'Mithiladhipati'. The manuscript of the *Anargharaghava* of Murari composed by a Maithili author, son of Vardhamana, was commented upon by some Chitrakara Sukla, who is credited with having flourished under the patronage of king Ramasimhadeva.²⁰ Here Ramasimhadeva is described as one who defeated the Turuska king. Due to the mistake of the copyist, there has been a slight error in the pronunciation of his name. But this item of information is highly significant and important in establishing the fact that Ramasimhadeva was the son of Narasimhadeva and as such he cannot be placed after Hrisimhadeva. The date of Ramasimhadeva should be treated as finally settled on the basis of the evidence furnished by the Tibetan traveller, "Changlo-tsa-ba-chos-vje-dpal."

(Dharmaswami), who happened to be in India between 1233 and 1236 A.D. and met Ramasimhadeva at his capital Simaraongarh. According to Dharmaswami, Ramasimhadeva had ascended the throne seven years earlier, that is, in 1227 A.D.²¹ Thakur suggests that Ramasimhadeva ascended the throne in 1225 and after "a reign of 58 years he breathed his last in 1276 A.D."²² Probably he failed to see his own discrepancies because even a simple arithmetical calculation would bring the total of Ramasimhadeva's reign to 1283 A.D. At the same time the version of Thakur is not authentic as he has failed to indicate any source of authority for his opinion. In view of the above mentioned facts, the date of the accession of Ramasimhadeva should be treated as finally settled till fresh evidence contrary to this is forthcoming.

Petech is of the opinion that both Narasimhadevas maintained some connection with Nepal because these names find place in the early portion of the *Vamsavalis*.²³ The *Vamsavali* in possession of Tucci narrates how Ramasimhadeva was dethroned by the Mukundasena, king of Palpa in western Nepal. Mukundasena is said to have invaded and plundered the valley but incurred, thereby, the wrath and displeasure of Lord Pashupati.²⁴ His army was destroyed by pestilence and he himself died in course of his retreat and flight. D.W. Wright gives us the same story but the event is referred back to the time of Harideva which is impossible on the basis of the chronology.²⁵ The *Vamsavali* in possession of Tucci refers to three eras; and Petech has rightly taken the note of Samvat 1167 and has referred it to the Saka era equivalent to 1245 A.D. There is a valid ground for this type of thinking on the part of Petech because the 'Vikrama' era was not then employed in either Nepal or Tirhut. 1245 A.D. synchronizes with the date of Ramasimhadeva. Petech has hazarded a conjecture that the reign of Ramasimhadeva ended in 1252 A.D. But this is not a fact. There is no harm in accepting the truth that the political condition of Mithila was disturbed at that time. Mukundasena's invasion was in the form of a raid as no permanent occupation of Tirhut is indicated therein. Abhayamalla was ruling over Nepal at that time. It must be accepted that Mukundasena was

no more than a political adventurer of western Nepal. Taking the advantage of the weakness of the King of Mithila, he wanted to fish in the troubled waters of Tirhut in which he gained little success. Nepal was passing through a serious famine as mentioned in the contemporary chronicles and Ramasimhadeva was also very much hardpressed by the advances of the Muslims. Mukundasena, naturally, therefore, wanted to embark upon a conquest to subjugate this region. Ramasimhadeva has been credited by Dharmaswami of having fortified his capital as he was apprehensive of the Muslim invasion. It seems very likely that he was also taking a precaution against the evil designs of Mukundasena. Besides this, Ramasimhadeva is also mentioned in the history of Nepal in an obscure context concerning the functions and religious ceremonies and has been described as Appu Ramasimhadeva and the date mentioned therein is 364, "Jyestha Krsna Pratipada," equivalent to May 24, 1244 A.D.

Ramasimhadeva was a great devotee and a great patron of sacred literature. He was a very farsighted and successful king and he effectively organised the administrative system in his kingdom on sound and efficient lines. He was instrumental in effecting several important social changes. Certain fundamental rules concerning society and religion were also framed for the guidance of the Hindus. He also set forth certain moral codes for his subjects. In each village an officer was appointed, "to adjudicate upon all questions arising from working of new canons of conduct."²⁶ He also appointed police officers for the security of the subjects in the villages. These officers were required to make daily reports of the occurrences to the Chaudhary, who used to be the head revenue collector of the Pargana. These officers were very important and the mode of the payment of their salary was not in cash. They were given land for the services rendered by them to the king.

The Karnata period was surely pioneer in many respects so far as the matter of administration was concerned. During the period of Gangadeva and Ramasimhadeva, the system of 'jagirs' was started and in due course it was stabilized. Various officers serving the dynasty derived benefit from this scheme. The system of 'Patwari' in Mithila came into practice during the reign of Ramasimhadeva. Many tanks in the villages were dug and

numerous temples were also constructed in the vicinity of Mithila. His subjects were very happy because of the charitable disposition of their king.

The reign of Ramasimhadeva witnessed a remarkable and vigorous outburst in the realm of literature and philosophy. There are many references regarding him in the Sanskrit literature. His 'Sadasya' wrote a commentary on the lexicon *Amar-kosatika* (Vyakhyamrta). The name of this learned commentator was Srikara. There were other scholars who adorned his court and prominent among those are Prithwidhara, Ratneswara, and Chitradhara. There were many other commentaries and treatises were compiled in large number during his reign. There were also scholars who advised the King on administrative matters; and they were known as ministers. Ramaditya and Karmaditya were two important ministers who used to advise his father and they continued in the same capacity during his reign also. From the Havidihā inscription we learn that Karmaditya served as a minister under Ramasimhadeva. He seems to have maintained the independent character of Mithila throughout his reign.

As Ramasimhadeva was a great patron of art and learning, Mithila, during his reign continued to be the firm citadel of all the Sanskrit scholars of north India. Although the reign of Ramasimhadeva is politically not very important, yet in the literary and cultural spheres his reign signifies an important landmark. He personally was an orthodox believer in the Hindu way of life but he had the large heartedness to tolerate all other religions. Dharmaswami, the Tibetan traveller was a Buddhist, but he was received in his court with due cordiality and courtesy. The King was gracious enough to accord great welcome to him and Ramasimhadeva offered him the place of the chief-priest of the palace. From the authentic accounts of Dharmaswami, it is very clear that the Hindu and the Buddhists were not at loggerheads and the relationship between them was very cordial. The greatest instance of this fact was the King himself, otherwise Dharmaswami would not have been considered for such an honourable assignment. It so transpired that the Hindu aristocracy helped the Buddhist monasteries, and the Buddhists in their turn used to frequent the temple of

Lord Siva and Goddess Kali. The spirit of tolerance was there in an ample measure.

Dharmaswami also refers to the existence of a large number of 'Tantric' cults in the heart of Mithila. According to him Vaisali presented a totally deserted appearance. He also gives the following description of the town 'Pa-ta' which has been identified as Simaraongarh, the capital of the Karnata kings. 'Pa-ta' had about six lakh houses and was surrounded by seven walls. But the palace of the King was situated outside the walls, and special security measures were devised to safeguard the royal palace from the enemy attack. The palace had eleven big gates and was surrounded by twelve ditches of water and many lines of trees. These security measures were strictly adhered to as there was a constant threat from the ambitious scheme of the 'Turuskas,' who had led an army against the town but miserably failed to reach the same. When Dharmaswami called on Ramasimhadeva in his palace for the first time, he is said to have greeted the 'Raja' in the Sanskrit 'sloka'. The King was attracted by the behaviour and scholarship of this Buddhist Tibetan traveller and was kind enough to request him to become his chaplain.

It is held that Tughan Khan conquered the kingdom of Mithila and said to have imprisoned the King. It is further held that in recognition of his brave services and valiant nature, the Karnata King was later on released with honour. He was sent to Darbhanga as a king.²⁷ In view of the eye-witness account of Dharmaswami,²⁸ the Tibetan Buddhist traveller, this account cannot hold good. He also bears testimony to the fact that Turuskas failed to reach the Karnata capital. In addition to this evidence, we have another indigenous source in the form of a commentator of *Anarghraghavatika*. The commentator suggests that Ramasimhadeva was victorious over his Muslim rival. In the thirteenth century, Bihar was practically under the Muslim domination. It is accepted that Hussamuddin Iwaz used to extract tributes from Mithila. In so far as the problem of safety and security of Mithila was concerned, it fell upon Ramasimhadeva's shoulder to protect the independence of Mithila in his own way. His independent spirit and attitude invited the attention of Tughril-Tughan who is said to have attacked Mithila.

Jadunath Sarkar has very correctly asserted that attack yielded him rich booty but no submission.²⁹ Even the slave King Balban had rushed upto the frontiers of Mithila.³⁰ He marched against Mughisuddin of Lakhnauti by way of Mithila till his advance was halted somewhere between Mithila and Lakhnauti.

Again, as a matter of fact, the internal dissensions among the Muslim governors of Bihar, Oudh and Lakhnauti and their own numerous domestic problems regarding the stabilization of their kingdoms hardly allowed them any time to advance towards Mithila and occupy it. The high sounding epithets like "Bhujabalabhima" and 'Bhimaprakrama' attributed to Ramasimhadeva; and at the same time, also the evidence of Dharmaswami, enable us to hold that he contributed to "dull the sharp edge of the striking Muslim swords."³¹ The independence of Mithila was asserted and maintained. It is a fact that we do not know about any successful exploits of Ramasimhadeva but this much is a certainty that he had to fight against his Muslim adversaries to protect and safeguard his own kingdom and interests. In these entanglements, he had achieved admirable success. Judging all these details, one comes to the inevitable conclusion that Ramasimhadeva was by all means a successful ruler.

SAKTISIMHADEVA OR SAKRASIMHADEVA

The problem of succession of Saktisimhadeva brings yet another controversy in the Karnata dynasty. Mithila-tradition asserts that Sakrasimhadeva succeeded Ramasimhadeva.³² The other opinion is that Saktisimhadeva³³ was the king who succeeded Ramasimhadeva. In the Pratapamalla inscription³⁴ mention has been made of Saktisimhadeva. There is no doubt that this evidence is conflicting. It is, therefore, desirable to discuss the problem of succession after Ramasimhadeva. Even after numerous researches which have been carried on by distinguished historians, the whole question of Mithila-chronology under the Karnata rulers is in a state of great confusion. It is not only Mithila tradition but also the *Vamsavali*, which is in the private library of Kaiser and was consulted by K.P. Jayaswal,³⁵ places Sakrasimhadeva as the successor of Ramasimhadeva. The *Vamsavali* under possession

of Kaiser and the *Muditakuvalayaswa* present sharply conflicting opinion and accounts; and instead of Saktisimhadeva or Sakrasimhadeva, they present one Bhavasimhadeva. In the manuscript of *Kasikavivaranapanjika*³⁶ there occurs the name of a king of Mithila, *Virasimhadeva*, ruling over Mithila on November 18, 1280 A.D. But there is no mention of Virasimhadeva in any tradition of the history of Mithila and hence this name cannot be accepted.

Petech believes that "Oscillation in the names of Ramasimhadeva's successor seems to point to a period of Civil War."³⁷ There are only few exact dates in the Karnata chronology which are known to us:—

- (i) The succession of Nanyadeva in 1097 A.D.
- (ii) Birth of Ramasimhadeva in 1183 A.D. (Petech, p. 194)
- (iii) The succession of Ramasimhadeva in 1227 A.D. (Dharmaswami)

The Nepalese sources add to our discomfiture regarding the settlement of the dates. According to these sources, between Saktisimhadeva and Harisimhadeva, the ruling monarch was either Bhupalsimhadeva or Karmasimhadeva. Petech, on the basis of the *Vamsavali* under possession of Kaiser (p. 15), has rightly constructed the chronological setup of the Karnatas in the following manner. In 1907 A.D. Nanyadeva ascended the throne. He was succeeded by Gangadeva, the latter by Narasimhadeva. Narasimhadeva was followed by Ramasimhadeva. The successor of Ramasimhadeva was Bhavasimhadeva. Again, Bhavasimhadeva was succeeded by Karmasimhadeva to be succeeded by his son Harisimhadeva in Saka 1205/1283 A.D. The chronological order upto Ramasimhadeva in the *Vamsavali* under possession of Tucci is the same as above and then it abruptly comes to an end. However, Saka 1019 and 1205 are the two definite dates in the *Vamsavali* under possession of Tucci which indicate a proper perspective for the chronology of the period under review. Even the modern researchers are not in a position to provide an exactly correct date as yet.

The most curious, at the same time extremely noticeable, point in the history of Mithila after Ramasimhadeva is the mention of Sakti (or Sakrasimhadeva) in the traditions of

Mithila as a ruler. Less frequently, Bhupalasimhadeva is also mentioned as a ruler of Mithila. These names have not been assigned any reign-period in the Nepalese tradition whereas in Mithila tradition, we find one Virasimhadeva ruling over Mithila in 1260 A.D. In absence of any genealogical table, we may assume that Virasimhadeva was very possibly ruling in that part of Tirhut of which Malladeva was the master after the death of Nanyadeva. He might have been a descendant of Malladeva and that is why he seems to have been ignored in the Mithila tradition. Even Nepalese sources have not cared to mention him because he was not in the direct line of succession of the ruling dynasty of Nanyadeva. There are grave doubts about Saktisimhadeva also. Saktisimhadeva does not appear as a lineal descendant of Ramasimhadeva in the *Vamsavali*. Under the circumstances we may take Saktisimhadeva to be a descendant of Virasimhadeva and consequently of Malladeva. In the existing state of our knowledge, it is not possible to agree with Petech that there was a civil war after Ramasimhadeva. The other probable explanation seems to be that Sakrasimhadeva (Saktisimhadeva) was ruling in the eastern part of Mithila and Harisimhadeva was extending his sway over his paternal territory of Simaraongarh. If Bhavasimhadeva was the son of Ramasimhadeva, he certainly predeceased his father.

Bhavasimhadeva does not find any place in any tradition. The confusion, thus created by the death of Ramasimhadeva, seems to have got mixed up in the tradition, which has been so faithfully and reliably maintained with some minor differences here and there. There is yet another possibility. Sakrasimhadeva, belonging to the line of Malladeva, might have taken advantage of this confusion. But he must have been routed by Harisimhadeva and hence the chroniclers have thus, confused the issue. At the same time the fact and events pertaining to the autocratic attitude adopted by him and the consequent wrath caused among his nobles and courtiers, certainly indicate some extra-ordinary event during his reign. But in no case one can push Ramasimhadeva earlier than 1279 A.D. Even if we go to the extent of accepting Karmasimhadeva as his grandson, it must be admitted that he was overthrown and ousted by

Sakrasimhadeva. The initial success of Sakrasimhadeva made him arrogant and this created a feeling of annoyance among his nobles. The nobles did not appreciate the increase in the power and strength of the monarch so that they might be ultimately ignored. It has been established that Sakrasimhadeva remained satisfied with Sakkuri (modern Sakuri) and the neighbouring areas. Harisimhadeva was the lord of the area in the vicinity of Simaraongarh. The problem would remain shrouded in mystery until the descendants of Malladeva are brought to light. On the basis of the scanty-material available, it might be conjectured here that Sakrasimhadeva belonged to a different line and even when he tried to establish his relationship with the two houses of the Karnatas i.e. the house of Gangadeva and Malladeva, the people and the tradition could not afford to accept him as the king of Mithila.

Most likely Saktisimhadeva of the Nepal inscriptions seems to have been confused with Sakrasimhadeva, the traditional founder of Sakkuri.³⁸ It is held that after the death of Ramasimhadeva, he ascended the throne in his early forties. He is said to have been a contemporary of Alauddin Khilji. It is said that in A.H. 697 (1196 A.D.) there was a Muslim invasion of Mithila and the leader and the general of the Muslim army was Sheikh Mohammad Ismail. The Karnatas of Mithila drew the first blood but the blessings and smiles of fortune proved very shortlived. Ultimately the Karnatas were forced to agree to pay taxes to the invaders. It is also held that at the outset the Hindu King of Mithila was taken as a captive, but when he promised to pay taxes regularly, he was released and appointed the Commander-in-Chief of the Hindu army of Alauddin Khilji.³⁹ He is said to have helped Alauddin Khilji against Raja Hammirdeva of Ranthambhor. A mosque at Darbhanga reminds us that there was a struggle for supremacy between the Muslim invaders and Sakrasimhadeva of Mithila in which the latter was vanquished otherwise the 'mosque' would not have been completed. Sakkuri and Sukhidighi still commemorate the name of this King.

The tradition of Mithila preserves an account that Sakrasimhadeva along with his ministers Devaditya and Vireswara went to the Court of Alauddin Khilji. The mention of the

reported help to Alauddin Khilji against Raja Hamiradeva of Ranthambhor is corroborated as Hammira is mentioned in some contemporary literature of Chandeswara's *Krityachintamani* and also in *Prakritapainglana*. There is another possibility to prove this act of help given to Alauddin Khilji. Sakrasimhadeva might have helped as a protective and security measure against the Governor of the Sultan of Bengal, Rukunuddin Kaikus.

Sakrasimhadeva is also known as "Hammiradhwantabhanu". Alauddin Khilji conferred on Devaditya the decoration of "Mantriratnakara". It is also beyond doubt that Sakrasimhadeva was ruling over part of Mithila efficiently and that he could establish friendly relationship with Alauddin Khilji. If the theory regarding the conquest of Nepal by Alauddin has to be accepted, it is possible to conclude that after his fight with Sakrasimhadeva and later with his collaboration, Alauddin Khilji made headway in Nepal and coins were circulated in his name. For the present we have no other positive evidence to suggest the alliance between Sakrasimhadeva and Alauddin Khilji; and the joint campaign against Raja Hammiradeva except the traditions of Mithila and the "confused and unconfirmed" account of Mulla Taqia.

In the present state of our knowledge a very important internal evidence enables us to hazard a conjecture. Bengal had penetrated its influence into the very heart of Mithila and it appears that the extent and size of Karnata kingdom of Mithila was considerably reduced. The Maheswara inscription of Firuz Aitigin, Governor of Rukunuddin Kaikus of Bihar speaks of a magnificent building constructed on the northern bank of Gandak, in the vicinity of Maheswara, a village situated in the Begusarai subdivision of the district of Monghyr. This important inscription of Firuz Aitigin, Governor of Rukunuddin Kaikus, was discovered and edited by R. K. Choudhury in 1956 in the Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Poona. The inscriptions were discovered from village Maheswara on the Gandaka in Begusarai subdivision in the district of Monghyr. The inscription dated 1290-91 A.D. is indicative of the fact that the Bengal Sultan had extended upto this region and naturally the authority of

the Karnatas must have been considerably reduced. The possibility of contest between the two powers cannot be precluded. The high sounding titles of Firuz Aitigin is suggestive of the fact that he wielded sufficient power. It is one of the earliest inscriptions available in north-eastern India. On the basis of this, it is reasonable to believe that a good portion of the Karnata kindom between the Gandak and the Ganga had passed into the powerful hands of the Sultan of Bengal. Since the Hindu rulers of Mithila were then following a policy of "Vetasivritti", there was nothing unnatural if Sakrasimhadeva, after being defeated by Alauddin Khilji, sought his alliance as a protection against the whims of the Sultan of Bengal. If the contention about Sakrasimhadeva as belonging to the line of Malladeva be accepted, it is fair to surmise that his kingdom was very small and was constantly under pressure on all sides by the Muslims and in that case he placed his services at the disposal of Alauddin Khilji.

The erection of a huge structure on the bank of Gandak by Firuz Aitigin was possibly to check the raids from the side of the Karnata kings of Mithila. The assumption of lofty title by the Governor of Ruknuddin Kaikus in Bihar shows an attitude of the Barani lines towards the Khiljis.²⁶ In any case, the Maheswara inscription is no doubt a rare discovery in so far as the history of north Bihar is concerned.²⁷ All these circumstances go on to explain that the glory of the Karnatas of Mithila during the stewardship of Sakrasimhadeva was definitely on the wane.

Sakrasimhadeva was an audacious and despotic ruler and cared very little for the welfare of his people. Temperamentally he was harsh and hotheaded. His despotic manners and harsh utterances offended his nobles and one of his ministers established a Council of Seven Elders²⁸ as a check upon the autocratic powers of the king. There seems to have been some sort of palace uprising which deprived the king of his actual power. It is not definitely known as to when and how his reign came to an end. The palace uprising seems to have compelled him to abdicate the throne possibly in favour of Harisimhadeva, who was a minor at that time. The executive powers were vested naturally in the Council of Elders

which looked after the administration as regent till Harisimhadeva came of age to supervise the administrative machinery.

SUCCESSION AFTER SAKRASIMHADEVA

In the inscription of Pratapamalla, there is one more king, Bhupalasimhadeva, and he is placed between Saktisimhadeva and Harisimhadeva.²⁹ This king does not find any mention in the tradition of Mithila; and there is no reign-period allotted to the king in the Nepalese sources. While in the Nepal *Vamsavalī* Harisimhadeva has been shown as a successor of Ramasimhadeva, in the Nepalese inscription he is shown as the son and successor of Bhupalasimhadeva. The *Vamsavalis* are more or less sometimes confusing and misleading while the Nepalese inscription very nearly approaches the tradition of Mithila. In one of the traditions of Mithila, there is a reference to the fact that Saktisimhadeva had a son named Bhupalasimhadeva. It is difficult to say whether Bhupalasimhadeva ruled or not. The inscription of Pratapamalla, modern *Vamsavalis* and K.P. Jayaswal place Bhupalasimhadeva between Saktisimhadeva and Harisimhadeva while the *Vamsavalī* under possession of Kaiser and *Muditakuvalayaswa* place Karmasimhadeva between the two. The *VK* has Ramasimhadeva who had a son named Bhavasimhadeva. The name of the son of Bhavasimhadeva was Karmasimhadeva whose son Harisimhadeva ascended the throne in Saka 1205. No colophon, literary or even epigraphic evidence bears testimony to the rule of Bhupalasimhadeva. We have to bear in mind one difference here. The Pratapamalla-inscription simply gives the genealogy of the Karnata dynasty and not the names of actual rulers of the dynasty where the *Vamsavalis*, though confused, give us the list of the rulers of Mithila. Even the relationship between Bhupalasimhadeva and Karmasimhadeva is not known to us. Both Bhupalasimhadeva and Karmasimhadeva do not seem to have ruled over Mithila while Bhupalasimhadeva seems to have predeceased Harisimhadeva. We know that Sakrasimhadeva or Saktisimhadeva ascended the throne of Mithila in his early forties, comparatively a later age, in view of the long reign of Ramasimhadeva. We cannot speak with certainty regarding the length of the reign of Sakrasimhadeva. If the authority of the colophon of a *ASS MSS* (No. G. 4795)

of the *Bhattikavyam* dated in the L. SS. 159 be accepted, Harisimhadeva began his reign in 1288/1276 A.D. This evidence is not supported by any positive information of merit. If this solitary evidence be accepted as a valid ground for any conjecture, it must be admitted that Harisimhadeva ruled nearly for fifty years and in that case it is very likely that he must have ascended the throne as a minor. Though seventh in the descent from Nanyadeva, he was the sixth and the last king of Karnata dynasty.³⁰ But there is some inexplicable gap in both Nepalese and Mithila traditions. The only possible solution to this mysterious question is to be sought in the fact that since Bhupalasimhadeva predeceased Harisimhadeva, he does not find a place in the Mithila tradition, though he is mentioned in the genealogical table of Nepal. There is no evidence to testify to the reign of Bhupalasimhadeva. Similar is the case of Bhavasimhadeva and Karmasimhadeva. Sakrasimhadeva might have belonged to any lineage but the fact that he was succeeded by Harisimhadeva is above dispute. With this conclusion, the problem of Karnata-succession upto Harisimhadeva seems to be a settled question with slight variation in the chronological sequence.

Notes

1. *JIH*, XXXIV p. 325.
2. *JASB*, (NS) XI pp. 412-13.
3. *TM*, pp. 266-67.
4. *MTV*, p. 115.
5. *MD*. p. 62, *IA*, (1880) p. 188 *JBORS*, X p. 46.
6. Todd, *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*, p. 365.
7. *ABOR*, XXXV pp. 107-8.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 110.
9. Todd, *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*, p. 110.
10. *ST*, p. 62. Cf. *ABORI*, p. 108.

11. *Archaeological Report of the Terain Excavations*, p. 634.
12. *History of Bengal-II*. pp. 22-23. *ABORI*, XXXV p. 108. R.C. Mazumdar, *History and Culture of Indian People*, Vol. VI Cf. K.R. Kanungo : *Artmalladeva*, Cf. R.K. Choudhury : *Bihar and Nepal* in G. D. College, Bulletin No. 4.
13. R. K. Choudhury : *Inscriptions of Bihar*.
14. *Ibid*.
15. Cf. Petech. p. 193. Samvat 303 Chaitra Sukla Sri Narasimbadevasya putra Sri Ramsimbadevasajata : thow Thakura. Petech says, "The term Thakura is used in the Newari portions of all later Malla inscriptions and documents with the meaning of sovereign."
16. *JASB*, (NS) XI p. 413. *JASB*, 1993. Pt. II p. 19.
17. *IHQ*, XXXI p. 287, *JASB*, (NS) XI pp. 413-432.
18. *JHI*, XXXIV pp. 323-325. *ABORI*, XXXV p. 110.
19. *Proceedings of the Indian Historical Records Commission* (1951) p. 256.
20. K. P. Jayaswal, *Descriptive Catalogue of Mithila*, Vol. II. Introduction. pp. 10-11. Also the Section *Kavyagranthari* No. 2.
21. *ABORI*, XXXV p. 110 ff.
22. U. Thakur, *History of Mithila*, p. 266.
23. D. W. Wright, : *History of Nepal*, pp. 170-172.
24. Petech, pp. 194-195.
25. D. W. Wright : *History of Nepal*, pp. 170-172.
26. *MDG*, Quoted in *TM*, p. 274.
27. *ABORI*, XXXV p. 112 fn.
28. Roerich, *Biography of Dharmaswami* (Patna 1959) pp. 58-59. Dharmaswami has referred to Muslim depredations in the regions of Vaisali in some details.
29. *SHB*, II p. 46.
30. *ibid.*, pp. 52, 61-62,
31. *TM*, p. 273.
32. *MTV*, pp, 118-121. *MD*, 63 Mithila (Weekly, now defunct) February 9, 1953.
33. *ST*, p. 63 *GPP*.
34. *LA*, 1880.
35. Kirpatrick : *An Account of the Kingdom of Nepal*, (London 1811) pp. 255-266.
36. *JBORS*, XXI p. 37. Rahula Sankrityayana; Sanskrit Palm Leaf Manuscript from Tibet—the colophon of the above manuscript reads, "Lakshmanadeva."

37. Petech p. 190.
38. *BMI*, p. 483.
39. *ibid.*, p. 484. The events related by Mulla Taqia are not to be rejected outright as R.C. Mazumdar thinks (Vide *JBRs*, XLIII p. 2). Mulla Taqia does not belong to a school of traditionalists rather he was a recorder and he must have based his account on some source now not available to us. It is true that his account is "confused and unconfirmed" (p. 11). Petech doubts the authenticity of this date (p. 195). Cf. *CS*, p. 11.
40. *CS*, p. 9.
41. *ABORI*, XXXVI p. 163 ff. *Inscriptions of Bengal*, Vol. IV.
42. *D.G.*, p. 16.
43. *IA*, IX p. 188.
44. *PIHRC*, 1951, pp. 255-56.
MTV, p. 199 ff.
MD, 61 ff. *BMI*, p. 484.

Career and achievements of Harisimhadeva

Harisimhadeva was the last great king of the Karnata dynasty and undoubtedly the greatest king of Mithila after Nanyadeva. He has been spelt as 'Harisimha' in the Nepalese inscriptions, in Vidyapati's *Purusapariksa*, in the *Panjis*, in the traditional "slokas" and also in the *ASB-MSS* No: 8224. Only in one of the manuscripts of the *Krtyaratnakara* of Chandeswara, he has been spelt as 'Harasimha'.¹ Henceforward, he has been spelt as Harisimhadeva of Mithila.

The reign of Harisimhadeva forms a landmark not only in the history of Mithila but also in the whole of north-eastern India. Like all other kings of this dynasty, we do not have epigraphic or numismatic evidence to build up a scientific history of his reign and the only evidence that we have at our disposal is based on literature. It goes without saying that literary sources are at times confusing and misleading. In Vidyapati's *Purusapariksa*, he has been addressed as "Karnatakulasambhava", and "Karnatavamsodhabhava". In *Krtyaratnakara* of Chandeswara he has been called as "Karnatachudamani". In the *Dhurtasamagama* of Jyotirishwara Thakur he has been held as Hindupati, while the *Parijataharananataka* of Umapati refers to him as Hindupati-Harisimha. His reign is remarkable in view of his immense

contribution to the kingdom of Mithila in manifold ways. Like all great kings it "behoved him to be always active" and he left no stone unturned to make Mithila great and prosperous in different spheres. Harisimhadeva had his limitations no doubt, but he must be regarded as one of the greatest kings of Mithila. In a way he was the last great Hindu king of north India.

If the tradition of Mithila is to be relied upon and taken into consideration, Harisimhadeva was born in 1294 A.D. But this statement runs counter to a statement preserved in a manuscript of the *Bhattikavyatika* (ASB MSS No. G 4795) by Srinivasa dated in the L. Samvata 159 corresponding to 1278-79 A.D. We have no reason to reject this evidence outright. On the basis of this evidence the earliest limit of the reign of Harisimhadeva may be fixed according to *Vamsavali* in possession of Tucci in 1279 A.D. and if the *VT* is to be taken into consideration, his coronation took place in 1205 Saka (1283 A.D.). If the date of the establishment of the Panji system be taken into account and is fixed in 1294-95 A.D., it may be presumed that Harisimhadeva assumed the reigns of government in 1284-85 A.D. In any case, a long reign of about fifty years is not improbable for a king under whom three generations of ministers are said to have served. Tradition would make us believe that Harisimhadeva was a minor when he ascended the throne. The contention about Sakrasimhadeva or Saktisimhadeva stands further confirmed and verified that he belonged to a different line (belonging to the line of Malladeva), and even though he tried to join the two houses, people refused to acknowledge him as a king of Mithila. In that case the commentator of the *Bhattikavya*, must not have mentioned the name of Harisimhadeva. As stated earlier, Harisimhadeva was seventh in line of the Karnata dynasty from its founder Nanyadeva. According to Chanda Jha, Harisimhadeva was born in 1294 A.D. and ascended the throne in 1307 A.D.² K.P. Jayaswal puts the date of accession in 1310 A.D.³ But a thorough analysis of available materials and dates goes on to establish that Harisimhadeva ascended the throne in 1284-1285 A.D. and to me it seems to be the most convincing and acceptable date.

From the *Purusapariksa* of Vidyapati, we learn that Harisimhadeva was a contemporary of Yadava king Ramchandra of Devagiri and the two kings were on terms of correspondence.⁴ We learn further from the same source that Harisimhadeva was a contemporary of King Udayasimha of Gorakhpur.⁵ Without doubt, all these kings flourished in the first quarter of the fourteenth century and it is but natural if there existed any relationship among the contemporary kings.

We have already discussed that the autocratic behaviour of Saktisimhadeva had offended his nobles and they had, possibly, formed a Council of Elders of their own and held the reins of government till Harisimhadeva became a major. It seems that Harisimhadeva was declared to be the king of Mithila as a minor and actual power was wielded by the councillors who seem to have assumed sufficient political strength. Ganeswara was one of the ablest ministers of Harisimhadeva.⁶ He was in charge of the Department of Home Affairs. The introduction to Ganeswara's *Sugatisopan* throws very interesting light on the various aspects of constitutional history of Mithila. Ganeswara used to preside over the Council of feudal nobles in Mithila and had very high sounding titles and decorations as 'Maharajadhiraja', 'Mahasamanta' and 'Mahamattaka'. The colophon of the *Ganga-Pattaka* by Ganeswara refers to the author as 'Mahasamantadhipa', a title once assumed by Nanyadeva, the founder of the dynasty. This colophon is suggestive of the fact that there existed a class of powerful feudal lords, headed by Ganeswara in the court of Harisimhadeva.⁷ During the course of their administration while Harisimhadeva was a minor, they managed to strengthen their position in their respective spheres.

It is evident from the facts that these ministers and lords are found granting land and villages to persons of their choice without the sanction of the king.⁸ Among them Ganeswara, Vireswara, Chandeswara, Devaditya and a few others were very powerful ministers. We also learn from 'Prakratapaingalama'⁹ that Chandeswara was a powerful minister. A poet of Avahatta literature, Haribrahma, composed a poem as a panegyric on his patron Chandeswara and described him as a mighty and powerful minister. Although these ministers

enjoyed immense power, yet everything in the state was done in the name of the King. The feudal lords had amassed huge wealth and tried to grab power as far as practicable. While Harisimhadeva was a minor, these lords made hay and their material resources multiplied. It is to the credit of Devaditya that he successfully carried on the administration of Mithila during this period. We also come across the mention of Simaramapura in the contemporary Sanskrit texts, but popular traditions suggest that Harisimhadeva had built a second capital at Harisimhapur.¹⁰

The introductory verse of the *Sugatisopana* gives us a picture of the then political condition of the Mithila and the adjoining states. Feudal lords like Devaditya, Ganeswara and Chandeswara are recorded to have fought successfully against Hammira, Surtrana and the Mlechhas. It also refers to Gauda and goes on to illustrate some contact with the Muslims. We do not exactly know as to what type of contact Harisimhadeva had with the Gaudas.

Contemporary sources, mainly literary, go on to establish that the Muslim chiefs of Bengal were sharply divided among themselves. The main evil was their lust for power and this tendency weakened the Muslims in Bengal to a great extent. But this proved to be a problem of a very temporary nature. Mulla Taqia is of the opinion that Harisimhadeva was in league with Bahadur Shah, the rebel governor of Bengal. This might have been one of the factors responsible for inspiring Ghiyasuddin Tughluq to overrun Mithila, probably with the sole intention of teaching a lesson to the ally of his rebel governor. There is no definite evidence to substantiate that Harisimhadeva contemplated any expedition against Gauda. But at the same time it cannot be ruled out that he was a man of independent disposition and, as a true patriot, he left no stone unturned to repulse the Muslim invaders who were attacking Mithila at intervals. To meet the aggressive designs of the invading Muslims, he might have formed an alliance with Bahadur Shah, the rebel Governor of Bengal. A verse in the *Danaratnakara* suggests that at that time Mithila was sinking into the jaws of the Mlechhas and Harisimhadeva came to its rescue. He, possibly, defeated some Muslim king and this

fact is corroborated by the writings of Chandeswara and Jyotirishwara. He became a victim of the powerful Muslim onslaughts but it is believed that Harisimhadeva was able to recover his kingdom after the tide ebbed. The literary sources are there to prove that after the expulsion or voluntary withdrawal of the Muslims, *Dhurtasamagama* and *Danaratnakara* were composed. In fact *Dhurtasamagamanataka* was staged to commemorate the incident.

Had Harisimhadeva not achieved success, the descriptions of the *Dhurtasamagama* would not have been so flattering. A scene of this drama shows Harisimhadeva witnessing it on the eve of his victory over the Mlechhas (Muslims). This much is certain that a raid against Mithila from some neighbouring kingdom was organized which was led by the Muslims and this was repulsed by Harisimhadeva. Literary sources demonstrate that Chandeswara took very active part in expelling the Muslims from his kingdom. But there is no doubt that this expulsion or withdrawal of the Muslims was rather temporary in nature. The Muslims continued their overtures over Mithila and finally it was Harisimhadeva who was defeated by the Muslims and Mithila lost the last semblance of an independent Hindu kingdom in the north-eastern part of India. The 'Suratrana' of Jyotirishwara's *Dhurtasamagama* has been identified by some scholars as Ghiyasuddin Tughluq but such an argument does not seem to be reasonable.¹¹ Actually *Dhurtasamagama* was composed before the conquest of Ghiyasuddin Tughluq and hence the identification is baseless. K.P. Jayaswal thinks that the verse in *Danaratnakara* refers to the defeat of the Sultan of Bengal for which some credit has been given to Ganeswara.¹²

The reign of Harisimhadeva of Mithila witnessed many ups and downs. As a matter of fact he had ascended the throne in an abnormal time. While chances for expansion of his authority in north India were almost nil in view of the constantly increasing power of the Muslims, he paid special attention to Nepal which was weakened during the reign of Ramasimhadeva. The political condition of Nepal in the first quarter of the fourteenth century was in a fluid state. In the last decade of the thirteenth century in N.S. 409/1289 A.D. or N.S. 411/1291 A.D., the ruler of Tirhut invaded Nepal and

captured Bhatagaon, but he too was obliged to retire without consolidating his conquests. In N.S. 431, corresponding to 1311 A.D., the 'Tirhutiya' came in again, captured Patan and ravaged and pillaged the whole country.¹³ This invasion took place during the reign of the Nepalese king Anantamalla (1274-1310 A.D.) under whose stewardship the Central Government in Kathmandu had considerably weakened. D.W. Wright has also suggested that during the reign of Anantamalla and his son, there was anarchy in Nepal.¹⁴ While Nepal was experiencing "Matsyanyaya", it was golden opportunity for the ambitious expansionist to strike. Nepal was already facing invasions from the north and the west.¹⁵ The invasion of Nepal by Tirhut in 1311 A.D. might be connected with the one for which Chandeswara takes credit.¹⁶

On account of these two invasions and consequent onslaughts on Nepal, the political stability had sufficiently dwindled there. The internal chaos and confusion, facilitated invasions of Nepal from all sides. Chandeswara's conquest of Nepal is the subject matter of a drama composed by him known as *Krtyaratnakara*. The traditional view is that Chandeswara conquered the whole of Nepal. He is said to have uprooted the kings of Raghu progeny and also to have touched the feet of Lord Pasupati for being blessed. Probably Chandeswara was first to do so. He also performed the 'Tulapurusa' sacrifice on the bank of river Bagmati. This function took place in Saka era 1236 (1314 A.D.). But according to D.R. Regmi one is not sure whether the place referred to lay in the Nepalese Valley or was somewhere in the Nepal-Terain.¹⁷ When the act of donation of gold equal to his weight was complete there was joy and happiness around. It also suggests that 'Tulapurusadana' was not yet obsolete in Mithila. The conquest of Nepal by Chandeswara was only a passing phase in the stormy career of Harisimhadeva. But it is a matter of great significance that the Karnatas had established their sway over Nepal right from the time of Nanyadeva. When the Mallas established their hold, they had shaken the Karnata authority¹⁸ and Chandeswara is said to have re-established the position of his master Harisimhadeva over Nepal between 1311 and 1314 A.D. Although a fruitful invasion of

Nepal was accomplished, yet we have no reason to believe that Harisimhadeva had a preponderant position in Nepal. There is a reference to a Thakuri prince ruling over Nepal in 1318 A.D. He might have been a very weak king but Harisimhadeva had no sway over him.

There are references to establish that from 1291 A.D. onwards Tirhut had begun to invade Nepal. D.R. Regmi does not accept the theory that Nepal was ever under the sway of Karnata rulers of Mithila¹⁹ and he differs with R.K. Choudhary and U. Thakur (addressing them as Maithil historians). According to him it has been a common practice with almost all the modern writers of Indian history to talk of the conquest of the Nepal Valley by Harisimhadeva of Mithila. They suggest that Nepal was conquered by him either in 1314 A.D. or 1324 while he sought refuge there after being expelled from his capital by Ghiyasuddin Tughluq.²⁰ Reference to Harisimhadeva's invasion of Nepal are common in some documents of comparatively recent origin. But if the VT date is to be relied upon, Harisimhadeva appears to have led an expedition against the Mallas of Nepal. The Mallas had, by that time, become powerful and they probably threw off the shackles of Karnata domination. From Simaraongarh, the Karnatas had claimed sovereignty over the local princes of the Nepal Valley, which, in those days comprised a much smaller area lying between the basins of the Gandak and the Kosi, twenty miles in length and twelve miles in breadth and watered by the river Bagamati.²¹

After stabilizing their power in Nepal, the Mallas are said to have extended their authority in the Terain area and by the time of Anantamalla, they had grabbed a good portion of it. A graffito dated 1234 A.D. of an unspecified era was discovered long ago. Levi took it to be of the Vikrama Samvat and placed it in 1177 A.D. Petech does not agree with Levi. He has not only corrected the reading of the present one but has also discovered a new one which provides the name of Ripumalla (1234 dated) and his son Sangramamalla. This date has been identified and accepted as the Saka era and thus it comes to 1312 A.D. From this graffito it is obvious that the Mallas extended their power upto Nilgriva in the Terain area. In the last quarter of the thirteenth century, the Mallas

were divided into two branches, i.e. at Patan and Bhatagaon. Hence, the feudal chiefs were getting the upper hand and the country was passing through a critical period. Naturally, this chaos and confusion facilitated the invasion from Mithila for which Chandeswara, the minister of Harisimhadeva, takes credit. The conquest provided for Harisimhadeva a solid foothold in the Valley. All the traditional *slokas* and the evidence furnished by the *VK* and *VT* suggests that he entered Nepal, after his debacle at the hands of Ghiyasuddin Tughluq in 1324-25 A.D. The manuscript in the India Office Library has the following variant in the last half of the verse : "duradiadesita pattat-grima vivesa."²²

On the basis of all these 'slokas', traditional and otherwise, the date corresponds to December 7, 1323 A.D. which was a Wednesday and not a Saturday.²³ From the colophon of the manuscript *Jatisamgraha*²⁴, it appears that introduction into Nepal of the mysterious goddess 'Tale' is attributed to Harisimhadeva. Its temple in Kathamandu is the highest in the town; and its shrine in the court (Darbar) of Bhatagaon is inaccessible to the Europeans. Even the Nepalese traditions ascribe this installation to Harisimhadeva. Bendall, though disbelieving the story of the invasion altogether, admits that Harisimhadeva and his ancestors were almost titular kings of Nepal even if they really claimed sovereignty over the Valley of Nepal."²⁵ Harisimhadeva's retirement to Nepal was compelled by circumstances and fate. Nepal had already acknowledged his suzerainty which has been partially admitted by D.R. Regmi.²⁶ There is an old chronicle in Nepal which suggests that "Harisimhadeva expelled from Simaraongarh came to Deopatan and received many riches—in 446 Magh Sukla 3, viz. January 7, 1326 A.D." This chronicle seems to be one year late in comparison with the Muslim source but we may suppose that before his arrival in Deopatan he had wandered in the Terain area for several months and this fills the gap. However, the mistake is very old, as no manuscript gives variant for the stanza.

The *VK*, *VT* and *VW* refer to Harisimhadeva's entry into the hill. Petech also disbelieves his entry into Nepal and suggests that his end is unknown. From the text of *Vamsavali*,

in possession of D.R. Regmi, the same conclusion is arrived at. Petech observes, "his (Harisimhadeva's) son Jagatasimhadeva, of course, would have taken his place among the highest nobility of the land. This would explain why the later chronicles have made Harisimhadeva an ancestor of the royal family and a king of Bhatagaon, although he never ruled there...the link between the later Mallas and Harisimhadeva can be sought only here and nowhere else."²⁷ The marriage of Jagatasimhadeva with Nayakadevi and his rule at Bhatagaon is indicative of the fact that Harisimhadeva must have ruled there. If we disbelieve the reign of Harisimhadeva, then how could Jagatasimhadeva enjoy kingship as his son?²⁸ Harisimhadeva's entry into Nepal was nothing more than the entrenchment of his power, which he was enjoying since long. Apparently, all others were ruling as his vassals. Otherwise, there is no reason why the *Vamsavali* should have mentioned his successors as rulers of Nepal. In the present state of our knowledge, it is very difficult to reject outright the reign of Harisimhadeva over Nepal. R.C. Mazumdar goes on to suggest that it was re-entry of Harisimhadeva into Nepal and the resources there enabled him to resist the Sultan of Delhi.²⁹

Circumstances provide proof for the fact that Harisimhadeva had to contend against powerful Muslim armies from all sides. In all the Muslim sources, referring to the invasion of Tirhut by Ghiyasuddin Tughluq with the solitary exception of Mulla Taqia, the name of the ruler of Tirhut is conspicuous by its absence. Chandeswara, Ganeswara and Joytiriswara bear testimony to the fact that the land of Mithila was flooded by the waves of the Mlechhas. From the *Dhurtasamagama* we learn that Harisimhadeva had initial success over the Muslim Sultan. The latest opinion is that the exalting references to victories over the Muslims can hardly apply to that episode. Harisimhadeva scored successes against the Muslims during the last days of the Mamaluka Sultans after the death of Balban in 1287 A.D.³⁰ The recent discovery of the Maheswara inscription dated 1290-91 A.D. supports this view.³¹ The extension of Kaikus's power upto the bank of Gandak in north Bihar might have precipitated a contest between the Hindus and the Muslims and Firuz Aitigin seems to have erected a big fort on the bank

of Gandak as a protection against the Karnatas. Most probably, this was the event that led the author of *Sugatisopana* to think of Harisimhadeva's contact with Gauda and provided Jyotirishwara with material for his drama. Verse 4 of *Krtyaratnakara* suggests that Harisimhadeva subdued his enemies, while verse 10 suggests that Vireswara, after having stormed the enemy-fort, excavated a big tank at 'Dahivata' and granted the village of Rampura to the 'Srotriyas'. Chandeswara is also credited with having rescued the earth submerged in the flood of the Mlechhas. Although all these events are based on hypothetical propositions, yet with the advent of Ghiyasuddin Tughluq, we certainly come on a surer footing of sober history of the period.

All the Muslim sources are unanimous on the point that Harisimhadeva of Mithila was defeated by Ghiyasuddin Tughluq. There is a striking similarity between Isami and the author of *Basatin-ul-uns*. These two accounts do not say anything about the fall of the fort of Tirhut and the consequent capture of its king. According to *Basatin-ul-uns*, the king of Tirhut had a very big army and fort. Though not very powerful, he was proud of his immense might. He had insulted previous kings and was not in a mood to submit. His fort was surrounded on all sides by water and jungle. The compiler of this manuscript was Mohammed Sadar Ala Ahmad Hasan Dabir, an hereditary servant at Delhi court and the Secretary of the Royal Chancery. The work was compiled during the first year of the reign of Muhammad-bin Tughluq. Harisimhadeva seems to have fought successfully against the invaders, though victory crowned to the Tughluqs. Isami, if read with Hasan Dabir, gives a clear picture. According to Hasan Dabir, Ghiyasuddin Tughluq handed over the charge of administration to the native people and according to Isami, Ahmad was left incharge of Tirhut as the imperial representative in Tirhut. Both these sources suggest that Harisimhadeva was not arrested but he escaped. After this event, Harisimhadeva failed to restore his authority in Tirhut and finally settled in Nepal. The absolute silence of Barni, Yahya and Nizamuddin does not presuppose the return of Harisimhadeva after the departure of Ghiyasuddin, nor the event of *Dhurtasamagama* can be connected with it.

As the Tughluq conquest of Tirhut could be achieved without any long and protracted struggle, these authors remain silent. This conquest sounded the death-knell of the independent Karnata kingdom of the Mithila.

Viewed from the political standpoint, the reign of Harisimhadeva was bristling with hectic activities and within a short compass he did not play an insignificant part in the political history of the north-eastern part of India. Like Nanyadeva, he had his famous adversaries and notable contemporaries. If Nanyadeva is regarded as having laid the foundation of an independent dynasty in Mithila, Harisimhadeva, the illustrious ruler, will go down in the annals of Mithila as "the greatest social reformer who organized the Maithil society in a new set up which is yet extant despite its adverse effects".³² His reign was fruitful both politically and socially. The remains at Simaraongarh are enough to make one "form an idea of what the Hindus of Mithila achieved prior to the advent of the Muslims" and the ruins over there are the living tales of "five centuries of incessant struggle between the Muslim bigotry and the Hindu retaliation."³³

The achievements of Harisimhadeva in the sphere of social reform are remarkable. His reforms in the field of society and religion did revolutionise the life and thinking of the people of the then Mithila. The Maithilas have been well-known for their excessive orthodoxy and conservatism. According to Grierson, Mithila has been a tract too proud to admit other nationalities to intercourse on equal terms, and has passed without changing its ancestral peculiarities and divining fast to mints, amice, cumin of Brahmanical law.³⁴ The first quarter of the fourteenth century A.D. witnessed the systematization and crystallization of 'Kulinism' in Mithila, which is believed to be in existence since tenth century A.D. Harisimhadeva is credited with having organized the entire Maithila-society on new lines.

Although, obviously the reforms might seem progressive to some, it was one of the most conservative reforms, the staggering effects of which are seen even to-day. The traditional story is that one Harinatha Upadhyaya contracted a marriage which was not in keeping with the 'Sastric' regulations, and the

husband and wife were not far removed in descent of relationship. Naturally, therefore, the marriage, thus contracted by an oversight, created a flutter in the Maithila-society and finally the matter was brought to the notice of ruling monarch Harisimhadeva.³⁵ The King immediately ordered for the reorganisation of the Panji and that was completed in Saka 1216 corresponding to 1294 A.D.³⁶ According to another tradition it was reorganized in 1313 A.D. A genealogy of the Maithila Brahmanas and Maithila Kayasthas were prepared under the orders of the King and even to-day, both the communities preserve the same with scrupulous exactness. The Brahmanas were divided into the following four groups :³⁷ (i) The Srotriya, (ii) The Jogyas, (iii) The Panjibadhas and (iv) The Jaibaras. These divisions were also incorporated in the marriage rules, which ultimately gave birth to the Panjikaras and the Ghatakas. The Panjikaras maintained the Panji and they issued "certificate of right" (aswajanapatra) at the time of marriage or on the occasion of the 'Sidhanta ceremony'. Like the Brahmanas, the Kayasthas were also divided into 'Bhalamanusas' and "Grihasthas" according to their 'Mulas'. It seems unlikely that the 'Mulas' were thrust upon the Kayasthas as Thakur thinks,³⁸ but it is more likely that they were divided into twelve important 'Mulas' in the name of those twelve persons who had accompanied Nanyadeva from Karnata country to Mithila.³⁹

Like the Brahmanas the Kayasthas were divided into four main groups : (i) Those twelve Kayasthas who came from Karnata country including the family of Sridharadasa were placed in the first group; (ii) The second group comprised those twenty families which were invited to come to Mithila for settling down after the establishment of the Karnata dynasty; (iii) The third group consisted of those thirty families which came to Mithila later. (iv) The fourth group was composed of those families which were last to settle down there during the reign of the Karnata dynasty. Suryakara Thakura, a descendant of Sridharadasa, took an important part in the organization of the Panji-system. The twelve Kayasthas who accompanied Nanyadeva were Laksmikara, Prabhakara, Devi, Punyakaradeva, Srikara, Syama, Salakhanadeva. Sripati,

Srivama, Harihara, Ratikara and Ratnadeva; the last named is said to be the ancestor of the Karna Kayasthas of Mithila. Like the Brahmanas, the Kayasthas of Mithila also have their own Panjikaras. It is believed that these genealogical tables were also maintained by the Ksatriyas and other castes of Mithila⁴⁰ and later on the system was discontinued. Presently, it is very carefully maintained only by the Brahmanas and the Kayasthas. In reorganising the Panjis, Harisimhadeva had in view to protect the purity of blood as far as practicable and avoid forbidden degrees of relationship and marriages.⁴¹ Later on the cult of Kulinism dawned and it divided the Brahmanas and the Kayasthas into a number of sections and subsections depending upon their status; social, economic, political, etc. But these sections and sub-sections were strictly in order of merit, according to various types of considerations lying therein.⁴²

During the reign of Harisimhadeva, books on 'Smritis' and Nibandhas were written and compiled for the protection of orthodox social set up in Mithila. In these books the rights and obligations of the four castes were clearly defined and viewed from the modern stand-point, it can be said that old rules were thrashed more and more and the people were advised to abide by the traditional rules and customs. Chandeswara, one of the well-known ministers of Harisimhadeva, wrote a number of digests, known as 'Ratnakaras'. From these 'Ratnakaras' it appears that all aspects of life were not only thoroughly discussed, but in the court even advices were offered to the king by the ministers on such subjects. Important principles, incorporating all aspects of the Hindu Law were established during the reign of Harisimhadeva. The *Krtyaratnakara* deals with the Hindu Civil Laws. In keeping with the traditions of the Karnata rulers, Harisimhadeva also constructed a large number of temples and got dug tanks and wells for the benefit of his subjects. He is credited with having founded Harisimhapura after his name; and probably it was his second capital. He maintained the traditional glory of his family though at last he had to bid adieu to his motherland in face of heavy Muslim attacks from all sides on his kingdom. Actually speaking, with his departure the last semblance of independent Hindu kingdom went out of existence.

ESTIMATE OF HARISIMHADEVA

We have already discussed that Harisimhadeva was the last king of the Karnata dynasty and he is very widely known. His stormy political career, bristling with hectic activities all around, had left a permanent impress upon the life and culture of the people of Mithila. Not only as a conqueror and administrator but also as a philanthropic ruler, he will be remembered by the posterity as one of the greatest kings of north-eastern India. His relationship with the kings of Gorakhpur and Devagiri is indicative of the fact that he was aware of the diplomatic significance of such connections. He was not only a warrior but also an able statesman. He was a great reformer and patron of art and learning. His court possessed the galaxy of scholars and statesmen of wisdom and prominent among those were Devaditya, Vireswara, Chandeswara, Jyotirishwara, Umapati, Suryakara, Ganeswara and many others. These dazzling luminaries would have been an asset to any court of the classical age of Indian History. It is quite evident from the *Purusapariksa* that he was a great lover of music and musical tunes thrilled him. There are instances of dramas being staged and songs being sung by the actors and artists to celebrate the memorable events of his reign. Religious literature, drama, poetry, music, criticism, erotics, and nibandhas in large numbers were produced at his court. It was his reign which witnessed the birth and consequent crystallization of the Mithila-literature. His entry into Nepal facilitated the expansion of Maithili literature, art, culture and traditions in Nepal and consequently a host of scholars had accompanied him over there. It has been very correctly pointed out that the remains of Simaraongarh are enough to make one "form a just idea of what the Hindu-Mithila achieved prior to the advent of the Muslims" in Tirhut. It is a fact that Harisimhadeva had to face rough weather due to muslim invasion of Mithila and though he was compelled to move towards Nepal valley, his eminence cannot be undermined in any way as a valiant and philanthropic King.

Notes

1. India Office Catalogue N. 1387.
2. Chanda Jha p. 68.
3. *JBORS*, XXII BR, Introduction p. 16. This contention is baseless.
4. *GPP*, p. 47. *JOT*, No. 2. *RR*, Introduction p. 16. vide Tales 2, 8 and 11.
5. *PP*, (Tale) p. 22.
6. *GPP*, p. 47.
7. *JIH*, XXXIV p. 326.
8. Cf. *Selected Papers of the All India Maithili Writers' Conference*, 1956.
9. *ABORI*, XXXV p. 114 Cf. R.K. Choudhury, *Harisimhadava of Mithila* (a reassessment of facts).
10. *ABORS*, XXXV pp. 91-121. *Prakrtapaingalama*, pp. 107, 184-88.
11. *ST*, p. 67 *MTV*, p. 135.
12. *RR*, p. 18 fn.
13. *VK*, p. 10, quoted in Petech pp. 215-16.
14. *OP*. Cit pp. 167-177.
15. D.R. Regmi, *Ancient and Medieval Nepal*, II.
16. *RR*, p. 22.
17. D.R. Regmi *Medieval Nepal*, p. 273.
18. *ABORI*, XXXV p. 117.
19. D.R. Regmi *Medieval Nepal*, p. 271.
20. *ibid.*, p. 272.
21. *DHNI*, I pp. 185-86. Levi, II pp. 62-68, *IGI*, XIX p. 25 ff.
22. *CSMPIO*, II p. 1414, No. 775.
23. *POC*, II p. 564.
24. *CSPMIO*. p. 1411 No. 7767.
25. *JASB*, LXXII (1903) p. 14, Petech, p. 112.
26. D.R. Regmi, *Medieval Nepal* p. 273.
27. Petech p. 116.
28. *ibid.*, p. 115.
29. *IBRS*, XLIII p. 5.
30. *JBR*, XXXVI p. 163 ff. Cf. C.S. pp. 9-11.

31. ABORI, XXXVI p. 163 ff.
32. U. Thakur, *TM*, p. 278.
33. *JASB*, IV p. 121.
34. *LSI*, V. Part II p. 4.
35. *JBORS*, III p. 516.
36. *BMI*, p. 494.
37. *JBORS*, III p. 516.
38. U. Thakur, *TM*, p. 362.
39. *MD*, II p. 15 ff.
40. *MD*, II p. 16. *HML*, I pp. 30-38.
41. *JBORS*, XXXIII p. 55.
42. U. Thakur, *TM*, p. 380.

Expansion of Muslim authority in Mithila down to 1325 A.D.

For a considerable period, Mithila was comparatively free from the onslaughts of the Muslim conquest. At times Mithila, as a part of Bihar, enjoyed all India importance for many years.¹ But despite its antiquity and historical interest, Mithila, however, has had no comprehensive history and unusual darkness shrouds this chapter of the history of Mithila relating specially to manifold aspects of the Karnata dynasty. According to a comparatively later source² Bakhtyar Khilji, a man of ungainly build and of humble lineage but nevertheless enterprising, bold, and sagacious, appears to have conquered some parts of the territory west of Mahananda. After consolidating his position, Bakhtyar Khilji set his eyes on Mithila. But there is some controversy among the scholars regarding the extent of Bakhtyar's conquests. Whereas it is generally admitted that he overran south Bihar, authorities are not unanimous as to the extent of his hold over north Bihar. Blochmann, without, however, mentioning any authority says that Bakhtyar took possession of south-eastern Mithila.³ Minhaj, the author of *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri* remains silent on this point. Kanungo, in his *History of Bengal*, holds that Bakhtyar's way to Bengal lay probably through Jharkhand. But very little credence can be

attributed to this statement and S.H. Askari has proved it confusing.⁴ However, there is a very important testimony furnished by Mulla Taqia of the sixteenth century, to this effect, who tells that Bakhtyar Khilji also invaded Tirhut and made the ruler of Karnata dynasty his vassal, before embarking his lightning raid on Bengal in 1201-2 A.D.⁵

In the absence of any contemporary evidence, the version of Mulla Taqia can be upheld, for he furnishes definite information with dates regarding Bakhtyar's march into Tirhut. He also mentions the names of the Karnata rulers of Mithila. In fact, his *Bayaz* is a very important source of information from which the history of Mithila during this period can be reconstructed. Mulla Taqia holds that the third ruler of Karnata dynasty, Narasimhadeva, was under Laksmansena of Bengal and was compelled to be a tributary of Bakhtyar Khilji.⁶ Bakhtyar had firm grip over Lakhnauti, Tanda, Tajpur, Ghoraghat, Barkababad, and eastern-most limit of Mithila i.e. the modern district of Purnea. In view of the above mentioned facts it is impossible to agree with the findings of Manmohan Chakravarty, who says, "During the thirteenth century, Mithila generally escaped the deluge of Mussalman inroads. The Muhammadans, on their way to Lakhnauti, marched from Oudh via Bihar and did not try to pass north of the Ganges."⁷ It is obvious that a portion of Mithila, no matter, whatever the size, came under the sway of the early Muslim invader. But the fact can not be altogether ruled out that it might have been a sort of loose sovereignty as is evident from the subsequent happenings. The later rulers had to embark upon fresh conquests to establish their control over Mithila.

Besides his authority in greater part of south Bihar, Bakhtyar held the riverine tracts on the north bank of the Ganga from the mouth of the Gandak river to that of Kosi. Portions of north Monghyr, Bhagalpur and Purnea might have been under his control. Purnea was the eastern boundary of Tirhut. The Mithila-king Narasimhadeva paid tribute to Bakhtyar simply to protect his kingdom against further onslaught and ultimate destruction. S.H. Askari believes that since Ali Mardan was allowed to pass through north Bihar,

the whole area must have been under Muslim domination. But his conclusion is a mere conjecture. There is no concrete evidence to show that Bakhtyar could occupy whole of Mithila and whatever reference we have about its being a tributary to Bakhtyar, is based upon the solitary evidence of Mulla Taqia. The term domination seems to be exaggerated, although the conquest of Mithila cannot be overruled in the present state of our knowledge.

Local and traditional sources speak of the contact between the kings of Mithila and Delhi. According to Vidyapati's *Puruspariksa*, the ruler of Delhi ruled from sea to sea and he was immensely helped by two young princes—Narasimhadeva of the Karnata dynasty and Chachikadeva Chauhan.⁸ The ruler of Delhi seems to be Shahabuddin Mohammad Ghori. It has been said that Narasimhadeva went to the court of Mohammad Ghori and fought for him.⁹ This congenial relationship between Narasimhadeva and Mohammad Ghori might have facilitated the path of Ali Mardan if we are to accept S.H. Askari's assertion—"He could not have been allowed to pass unmolested through a unconquered and hostile region."¹⁰ On the other hand it was the spirit of friendship which gave easy access to Ali Mardan. This view is not altogether untenable.

Later on Bakhtyar embarked on Tibetan expedition. At this time Ali Mardan was entrusted with the task of watching the eastern frontier. The Kosi, on the side of which Iwaz received Ali Mardan coming from Delhi, was the boundary of Bakhtyar's territory.¹¹ It is not known as to what happened to Bakhtyar's kingdom after his death; whether it passed on to the Sultanate of Delhi or to the kingdom of Lakhnauti. The sources and evidence are conflicting and confusing. The Tibetan expedition proved to be a colossal failure which afforded some respite to the Hindu kingdoms of eastern India. His soldiers stood demoralised and he was done to death by Ali Mardan in 1206 A.D. Bakhtyar's son Ikhtiyaruddin Muhammad is said to have raided Bihar and Mithila. Had Mithila been completely brought under Muslim domination there would have been no necessity of fresh raids against it.

With the death of Bakhtyar, Ali Mardan was appointed Governor and conquest of Bakhtyar passed silently within

Sultan Aibak's authority. But generally north-eastern India and particularly Mithila did not prove a bed of roses for Delhi. Mithila was not in a mood to accept the unquestioned sovereignty of Delhi. It left no stone unturned to preserve its independence. The very existence of Mithila was under permanent threat of Muslim occupation sandwiched as it was between Oudh and Lakhnauti. There was no modern means of communication to unite like-minded Hindu States in face of a common foe. The Hindu rulers had not accepted the emergence of the Muslim rulers in India for good.

The inglorious and sad exit of Bakhtyar created fresh avenues and opened the way for those ambitious adventurers who cast their greedy eyes on nearby territories. The independent status of the kingdom of Mithila was an eye sore to the ruling chiefs at Lakhnauti, who never gave up their desire for the proverbial granary of Bihar.

According to the *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, after being invested with the governorship of Lakhnauti by Qutubuddin Aibak, Ali Mardan marched towards Lakhnauti. When he crossed the river Kosi, Hussamuddin Iwaz came all the way from Devikot to accord a grand reception to him. There is no evidence of any opposition to this effect and this lends support to the view that a small but negligible part of Mithila bordering the course of the river Kosi was most possibly under the Muslim control. Hussamuddin Iwaz is believed to have ruled over the entire tract from the Rajmahal hills to the lower course of old Kosi, the accepted boundary between the kingdom of Lakhnauti and Mithila.¹²

In 1207 A.D. Qutubuddin's Governor of Oudh, Rumi, was ordered to march against Lakhnauti. When Rumi crossed the river Kosi, Hussamuddin Iwaz hurried to receive him and is said to have placed his services at his (Rumi's) disposal.¹³ Ali Mardan was supplanted by Hussamuddin Iwaz who extorted tributes from the neighbouring kingdoms of Jainagar, Vanga, Kamarupa, and Mithila. H.C. Rai holds the view that claims seem to have been rather of vague nature and put in by way of tall-talk and praise.¹⁴ We are not in a position to have a definite view regarding the nature of Iwaz's rule in Mithila (1213 to 1227 A.D.), since there was the inclusion of the modern

district of Purnea in his kingdom, it can be safely presumed that he was having eastern portion of Mithila under his sway. He is also said to have pushed the frontier of his kingdom up to river Gandak in north Bihar.

According to assertions of Mulla Taqia, the Karnata King of Mithila, Narasimhadeva, continued to send the agreed amount of tribute to Iwaz and consequently he kept his kingdom completely free from external pressures and onslaught. The then Raja of the Kosi-tract followed the policy of 'Vetasivriti' with regard to the Muslim rulers.¹⁵ The weakness of the one was the golden chance of the other. The following observation of Kanungo deserves notice. "The old Karnata Kingdom of Mithila was about this time breaking into fragments, after the death of Arimalladeva, and these princes in despair of holding their possessions in the plains, hemmed in between Muslim provinces of Oudh on the one side and the territory of Lakhnauti on the other were seeking compensation in the Valley of Nepal. The ruler of eastern Tihut could not but come within the sphere of influence of Lakhnauti."¹⁶ The above statement has no foundation and the futility of the conclusion has already been shown by the recent researches. It has to be pointed out here that Arimalladeva was not the king of Mithila during the period referred to by Kanungo nor there was any king of that name who might have any time extended his sway over Mithila. S.H. Askari has also overlooked the confusing statement of Kanungo.¹⁸ But there is no doubt that Iwaz made a bid for overlordship over eastern provinces. This excited the wrath of Iltutmish who despatched forces against Bihar to wrest it from Sultan Ghiyasuddin Khilji. R.C. Mazumdar has also maintained that the statement of Kanungo is without foundation and as such thoroughly misleading. He says, "....there is no evidence to show that Tihut was broken into fragments."¹⁹

When political ambitions of Iwaz increased, Sultan Iltutmish, after consolidating his position on the imperial throne of Delhi, turned his attention to the eastern provinces. He personally marched with an army with an intention of conquering Bihar and Bengal in 1225 A.D. The contemporary historian Minhaj-us-Siraj says that "the august Sultan on several occasions sent forces from the capital, Delhi, towards Lakhnauti, acquired

possession of Bihar and installed his own Amirs therein.²⁰ It is held that the progress of Sultan was held up in Bihar for some time. His ultimate victory over Iwaz was, however, brief and superficial. A treaty is said to have been concluded between the two; and according to the terms of the treaty Iwaz had to pay a heavy indemnity and acknowledge the suzerainty of Delhi. He is said to have sent to Sultan Iltutmish thirty eight heads of elephants and seventy thousands 'tanqas' in cash as presents. It shows Darbhanga as a part of imperial territory. Ghiyas (Iwaz) was brought to obedience. Iltutmish circulated 'sikka' and 'khutba' in his own name²¹ and returned to Delhi. He succeeded in separating Bihar from Bengal and placed Allauddin Mallik Jani in charge of Bihar. But the exit of Iltutmish from Bihar once again emboldened Iwaz and consequently Jani was expelled from Bihar. Mulla Taqia informs us that Mithila King Narasimhadeva helped Iwaz in re-establishing his hold over the territory. It seems that some sort of alliance between the two existed and both of them were opposed to the extension of Delhi Sultanate in the east. It seems natural as both of them were enjoying the fruits of independence in their respective kingdoms. Naturally, therefore, whenever the question of opposition of Delhi Sultanate came up it seems that the Hindu kingdom of Tirhut and Muslim ruler of Bengal preferred to combine together to combat the common enemy.

The expelled Governor of Bihar, Malik Jani, joined prince Nasiruddin Muhammad who was busy in suppressing the Hindu rebels of Oudh. In 1227 A.D., after two years of his expulsion, Jani managed to bring Nasiruddin Muhammad (the eldest son of the Emperor of Delhi) to the frontiers of Mithila and mobilised large forces there. Iwaz at that time, was busy with the contemplated conquest of East Bengal. He quickly returned from his eastern campaign, but the situation had deteriorated and turned against him in his absence. In a pitched battle, he was defeated, captured and beheaded in 1227 A.D. Nasiruddin amalgamated Oudh, Bihar and Bengal and established his capital at Lakhnauti. In 1229 A.D. his father gave him the title of 'Malik-us-Sharq' (Lord of the east) and also sent him a robe of honour. However, in the same year the prince

died. In the meantime Ikhtiyaruddin Balka, a close relation of Iwaz, asserted the independence of Bengal. Iltutmish led another expedition and defeated him and Malik Jani was put in charge of the government of Bengal while Malik Saifuddin Aibak was made governor of Bihar. Here, it is difficult to agree with the contention of U. Thakur, who relying on the Riyaz, observes, "Mussalman-Bengal Kingdom in pre-Mughal times included for the most part the whole of north Bihar."²² But facts, at our disposal, indicate a different situation at that time.

Narasimhadeva, in order to save the integrity and independence of his kingdom apologised to Iltutmish for his alleged complicity with Iwaz. By his shrewdness, thus, he succeeded in maintaining the independence of Mithila. The Karnata kingdom was miraculously saved, though it was always in danger from both sides. On the authority of Mulla Taqia, we can assert that Mithila continued to be an independent kingdom and any contact with the Muslims, either in the shape of subordination or alliance, was due mainly to diplomatic expediency. In view of these facts it is difficult to give credence to the assertions of Kanungo. Narasimhadeva ruled up to 1227 A.D. as an independent king and was succeeded by his son Ramasimhadeva, who had a very long reign. Although there were occasional raids, yet the independent status of Mithila can not be questioned on any score. By no means, we can bring it under Bengal in pre-Mughal times. Separation of Bihar from Bengal under Iltutmish is a significant event of historical importance. Iltutmish, a wise administrator, realised its importance first of all. Though his reign did not last long, it created an event of great significance in the sense that the later Muslim rulers kept a separate unit of Bihar for administrative purposes. Iltutmish died in 1236 A.D. and then we find the emergence of Tughril Tughan on the political horizon of the period under review.

Following the death of Iltutmish a number of governors ruled over Bihar and Bengal. The governorships of Bihar and Lakhnauti were highly alluring. The times were full of petty bickering and strifes, which the imperial court under the weak

successors of Iltutmish could scarcely control. Mithila was also free from their raids during this period.²³

The next personality to figure prominently in the course of the expansion of Muslim power in Tirhut is Malik Izzuddin Abdul Fatah Tughril Tughan, a Qara-Khatai Turk, "graced with many virtues and noble qualities." A former slave of Iltutmish who had served the Sultan in various capacities, as Saqi-Khas (Personal cup bearer) and Sahi-Dawat-Dar (Keeper of imperial writing case), he was appointed as feudatory of Badaun and on transfer of Saifuddin Aibak to Bengal, was made governor of Bihar. His term as governor is very important. He managed to maintain hold on Lakhnauti and also continued to exercise his unquestioned sway over Bihar. Thus, Bihar again lost its separate identity for some time.

Tughril Tughan (1236 to 1245 A.D.) legalised his authority as governor of Bihar. By procuring a formal recognition of his status by Sultana Raziya.²⁴ From his Bihar inscriptions, dated 640 A.H. (1242 A.D.), it appears that he was a man of lofty ambitions. He organised successful raids into Mithila which yielded rich booty but no submission.²⁵ He followed the path of aggression and led an expedition to Orissa and extended his rule up to Kara Manikpur in Oudh. Tamarkhan as the governor of Oudh raided all the eastern tracts including Mithila and took away large booty. He was then directed to go to Lakhnauti to assist Tughan in repelling the Oriyas.²⁶ Tughril Tughan as a governor of Bihar is understood to have invaded Mithila. This amply proves that Mithila was an independent Kingdom and hence it was considered essential by Tughan to bring it under his control. This was a task in which Tughan met with failure. The Mithila ruler then strengthened his position during the reign of Sultana Raziya. According to a statement of Mulla Taqia, Narasimhadeva, the Karnata ruler, is said to have asserted his position and showed defiance which invited the attack of Tughril Tughan. Tughan took him to Lakhnauti as a captive.²⁷ But later on Tughan released Narasimhadeva and reinstated him as the ruler of Mithila. Mulla Taqia seems to be wrong at this place as Narasimhadeva died in 1227 A.D. and this event is of 1236 A.D. when his son Ramasimhadeva was ruling over Mithila. The fact of the reign of

Though Minhaj does not, specifically, mention the name of the ruling king of Mithila, it is certain that he was none else than Ramasimhadeva. S.H. Askari has confused the issue with a king who was ruling in 1390 A.D.²⁸ Ramasimhadeva is said to have maintained the independent status of Mithila and he is regarded as one of such personalities of those days who mattered immensely in contemporary politics. This aspect is evident from a recently discovered source in Tibetan which confirms our contention that Ramasimhadeva was an independent ruler. The source is an eye witness account and it does not refer to his so-called arrest by Tughan.

Dharmaswami, the author of the account, stayed with Ramasimhadeva at Simaraongarh and his description of the fort there is marvellous. He accepts that Ramasimhadeva was pressed on all sides by the Turuskas and had, therefore, paid special attention to the strengthening of fortifications. There is no difficulty at all regarding his date as S.H. Askari complains. His reign covered the period from 1227 to 1285 A.D. This much can be accepted, in the circumstances, that although the occasional raiders took away large booty from Mithila, yet they could not secure submission in any case. Frequent raids were organised only because Mithila was independent otherwise such raids would have been completely uncalled for and unnecessary. Neither Bengal nor Delhi succeeded in subduing Mithila till the time of Tughluqs, for whom the glory of the conquest of Mithila was reserved. There were obvious signs of stress and strain in the political life of Mithila but it could withstand everything with great determination and courage till the advent of Ghiyasuddin Tughluq. The glory that Mithila was subjected to immense torture and continued humiliation till the final collapse of the dynasty was made known to the people by 1324-25 A.D.

While the events were moving with flickering quickness in the eastern India and more specially Mithila, the Delhi court was also witnessing revolutionary changes. Bengal was a constant source of headache to Sultan and Oudh was also not fully under his control. In between lay the kingdom of Mithila which was independent and it was a source of permanent trouble to both east and west as it was an anachronism in the then political set up of northern India. The emergence of Balban to power marked a turning point in the history of the Slave dynasty as he not only vanquished the rebels but also consolidated the kingdom of Delhi. This period witnessed Ulugh Khan in 1253 A.D. advancing as far as Bishanpur on the confines of Tirhut and returned with huge spoils to the royal camp.²⁸ The rise of Balban to power had also inspired Mughisuddin to sieze the province of Oudh which was in a state of chaos and confusion. By 1256 A.D. Balban had driven out its rebellious governor Malik Masud Jani and had increased the limits of the frontiers as far as the frontier of Mithila.²⁹

The Muslim sources further testify to the fact that a part of bigger geographical unit, Diyar-i-Bangala, had till then maintained independent existence and we find Balban instructing Bughra Khan to exert his power to conquer the area. Whether this geographical unit is to be identified with Darbhanga or not is a problem of the history of Mithila. The area around Garhi-pass (Teliagarhi) was the gateway to Bengal (Dwar-Banga) and might conveniently be called Diyar-i-Bangala or gateway to Bengal. As a considerable part of Garhi lay in the district of Purnea, the area may be regarded as a part of the eastern kingdom of Mithila. Since the route to Purnea was through Darbhanga, it has possibly been called "Diyar-i-Bangala—'Dware-i-Bung' or Darbhanga." Possibly this is the only key solution so far the name of Darbhanga is concerned unless some solution contrary to this is established.

Balban is also to have separated Bihar from Bengal. It is established that Bihar remained loyal to Delhi and was under an imperial officer.³⁰ Lakhnauti was made a province of the Delhi empire. Balban, on account of his serious pre-occupations with the Mongols, could not pay adequate attention to this far flung province of the east. In the meantime Sultan

Mughisuddin (1261-1281 A.D.) instead of acknowledging his authority³² mobilised his army and made rapid strides against Bihar. He issued coins and caused 'Khutba' to be read in his name. The first expedition to repulse him was organised in 1278 A.D. under the governor of Oudh, Malik Turmati, who was later on effectively joined by Tamar Khan Shamshi and Malik Tajuddin. The imperial forces crossed river Sarayu and advanced by way of Mithila till their progress was checked somewhere between Mithila and Lakhnauti.³³ In an encounter, the imperial forces were badly defeated.

Mulla Taqia does not make any reference to Balban in his account of Mithila. The imperial army might have simply passed through Mithila leaving its status intact. Curiously enough Mulla Taqia gives an elaborate account of Iltutmish and Raziya but there is nothing about the reign of Balban. As Balban's main aim was to subdue the governor of Lakhnauti to bring him under imperial control, Mithila probably did not attract the notice of the imperialists. The probability of Ramasimhadeva's neutrality can not be precluded. There is nothing to prove that "the natural boundaries of the land kept the enemies at bay" as U. Thakur³⁴ holds relying solely upon Manmohan Chakravarty.³⁵

Now the question arises as to why the imperial army selected this route if "land presented formidable obstacles?" In this connection, it may be held that it was not the natural difficulties that could preserve independence of Mithila, but the policy of "Vetasivritti" which was responsible for its independent existence till its final collapse in 1324-25 A.D. In 1279 A.D. the governor of Oudh Malick Bahadur also followed the same old route to Lakhnauti. He was also severely defeated. The charge was then assumed by the Sultan himself. In this encounter, Mughisuddin was defeated and killed.

Prince Nasiruddin Bughra Khan was made the governor of Lakhnauti in 1282 A.D. and he administered the province for about six years. When he came to know of Balban's death and consequent election of Kaikubad to the throne, he proceeded with a large army and entered the province of Bihar with a view to occupy Oudh.³⁶ He is also said to have followed the route through north Bihar. Bughra Khan marched

against his wayward of-spring to admonish him and advance as far as Ghagra in Saran Sarkar. This meeting between the father and the son has been immortalised by Amir Khusrau in *Qiran-us-Saidin*. A brilliant account is preserved in the Muslim chronicle also.³⁷ The long talk between the father Bughra Khan and son Kaikubad reconciled them. Bughra Khan left his claims to imperial throne of Delhi in favour of his son. He retained the governorship of Bengal.³⁸ The province of Bihar was also retained by him.

Nasiruddin Bughra Khan was succeeded by Sultan Ruknuddin Kaiku's who is said to have ruled from 1291 to 1301 A.D. He was accepted as the suzerain of Bengal and a portion of north Bihar. The Lakhisarai inscription³⁹ of the time of Ruknuddin is of immense significance so far as the history of the Karnata period is concerned. From this source we gather that Bihar, which had become a part of Bengal, attained an independent and separate status again. The inscription also contains the names of Ikhtiyaruddin Firuz Aitigin us Sultani and Ziauddin Ulugh Khan, the governor and Deputy governor of Bihar. It does not mention the Sultan of Delhi, Alauddin Khilji, but on the other hand records the allegiance of Bihar to Sultan Ruknuddin Kaiku's of Bengal. Further more the assumption of lofty titles by governor of Bihar⁴⁰ shows the attitude of the Balbani lines towards the Khilji imperialism. The designations are, "the king of kings of Turks and Persians," "the helper of the prince of the faithful," and also the assumption of such names as "the exalted Khaqan", "the Lord of East and China," and 'Alexander the Second' are highly suggestive of an independent attitude of the rulers belonging to the line of Balban.⁴¹ The recently discovered Maheswara inscription,⁴² one of the earliest in Bihar dated 692 A.H. corresponding to 1292 A.D. confirms the claim of Firuz Aitigin. One can not afford to ignore the significance of the words in the Maheswara inscription which read as "Hisn-i-Haseen" meaning impregnable fortress. It is evident from this inscription that Bihar, up to the district of Monghyr and both sides of the Ganga up to the vicinity of Gandak, formed a part of Kaiku's dominion. Bughra Khan and his successor Kaikus extended the limit of Bengal kingdom into

Bihar up to that area. But on this point also Mulla Taqia remains silent. The extent of his dominion amply proves that Ruknuddin Kaikus was not a weak ruler.

The emphatic assertion of Wolsey Haig that Kaikus owed allegiance to Alauddin Khilji does not hold good in the present state of our knowledge.⁴³ Yazdani goes on to say that the high sounding titles clearly indicate the strained relations between Delhi and Bengal. The authority of Firuz Aitigin seems to be unquestionable in Bihar. The high sounding titles in the Lakhisarai and the Meheswara inscriptions embolden us to infer that no matter whatever the size, the region attained a separate status from that of Bengal. It does not seem to be out of context and unnatural when we take into consideration the events that took place on the demise of Balban. The governor of Bihar did not lose the opportunity to assert independent status for himself and Bihar. And hence the emphasis on the study of the titles is very interesting. He is called Sultan Shamsuddin Firuz Shah after he took over government of of Lakhnauti. He appointed Tajuddin Hatim Khan as the governor of Bihar. The governor continued to administer the area once ruled by Firuz Aitigin himself.

Although, the size of Mithila-kingdom was greatly reduced, yet all the events taking place suggest that Mithila was maintaining independent status. The Maheswara inscription clearly proves that the Muslims were in possession of some part of Mithila in 1291-1292 A.D. Sakrasimhadeva is supposed to be then ruling over Mithila. He is credited with having established friendship with Alauddin Khilji. There were various Muslim raids in the area. We know very little about the activities of Sakrasimhadeva whose period of reign is also uncertain. Tradition makes him closely associated with the Khiljis of Delhi. There is a minor detail of the invasion of Mithila during this period according to Mulla Taqia. The date of invasion is 697 A.H. corresponding to 1297 A.D.⁴⁴

There is a lack of epigraphic or other records to show the extension of the Khilji rule in Bihar or more specially in Mithila. Our chief source of knowledge is the Bayaz of Mulla Taqia. It is the only authoritative guide and we learn that four battles were fought against the rulers of Mithila till the

time of Sakrasimhadeva. In the first two encounters near Maqbara the Maithil king defeated the army of Alauddin Khilji. Thereafter, the third battle was fought at Sakuri, a place founded by Sakrasimhadeva. In the fourth and the final encounter in 698 A.H., corresponding to 1298 A.D., the Maithil king was arrested. According to Mulla Taqia, the defeat of the Khilji's near Maqbara was of serious nature and in the surprise night attack the Muslims had to suffer heavily. Alauddin despatched re-enforcement to Sheikh Ismail as a result of which the Mithila king was defeated and sent as a captive to Delhi. Mulla Taqia further says that Sakrasimhadeva was appointed commander-in-chief of Alauddin's army against his⁴⁵ Hindu enemies⁴⁶. Sakrasimhadeva fought against Raja Hammiradeva of Ranthambhor and thereby gained the favour of Alauddin Khilji. The main strength of Sakrasimhadeva lay in the touchstone of his minister Vireswara.⁴⁷

An account of the above mentioned alliance between Alauddin Khilji and Sakrasimhadeva (or Saktisimhadeva) is preserved in the Mithila-tradition.⁴⁸ In the history of medieval India, Alauddin's conquest of Ranthambhor constitutes a landmark because he selected it as the first state for the trial of strength with the Rajputs on account of its nearness to Delhi. The events are also corroborated by Vidyapati in his *Purusapariksa*.⁴⁹ It is a fact that all these tales do not contain absolute truth but on the examination of contents, it is evident that Vidyapati used some solid materials before him for the construction of this story.⁵⁰ The assertion of Mulla Taqia about the relationship of Mithila-king Sakrasimhadeva and Alauddin Khilji can not be rejected outright as a pure fiction. The Mithila king is said to have gone to Alauddin's court with his ministers Devaditya and Vireswara. Chandeswara's description of 'Hammira' can not be rejected as he himself was one of the important personalities of the time and an active participant in the realm of political affairs. His statement should have some weight in the assessment of the period from the historical point of view. Mulla Taqia also refers to the financial assistance rendered to Alauddin by Sakrasimhadeva, the king of Mithila.⁵¹

Ferishta, the noted historian, is of the opinion that Alauddin conquered the whole Bihar.⁵² According to Amir Khusrau, Alauddin, after the victory of Karra, marched towards the garden of Bihar "to dye that soil with the blood as red as tulip".⁵³

In view of Mulla Taqia's assertions and the insistence of Mithila-tradition regarding the independence of Mithila, it is not out of place to maintain that Mithila, by and large, succeeded in preserving its independent status.⁵⁴ It was one of the many states which hoodwinked Alauddin. We know that the Hindus still remained powerful rulers in the Deccan, in Mithila, in Jajnagar and Gondwana.⁵⁵ In this circumstance, it may be held that the authority of Bengal-Sultan extending up to Begusarai districts, in the heart of Mithila-kingdom, might have compelled the Mithila King to court friendship with Khilji emperor. It seems more plausible in the present state of our knowledge than any other conclusion. Besides, Alauddin's imperial strategy needed a filip in eastern India as Bengal was hostile. The trial of strength between Alauddin and Sakrasimhadeva and the consequent friendship between the two are indicative of the fact that Alauddin realized the necessity of securing an alliance of Mithila against the Chauhan in the west and also for keeping the hostile ruler of Bengal at bay in the east. Mulla Taqia confirms this point. The Mithila King, in view of this friendship, succeeded in maintaining the independent status of his kingdom in face of all odds. The cordial relationship proved beneficial to both the parties.

But it is true that frequent raids in Mithila-territory became a reality, a fact confirmed by contemporary literary sources. Any fresh material confirming the line of Mulla Taqia will present a more scientific history of the period.

In view of above mentioned details, we can agree with the observation of S.H. Askari on the history of the period under review. The learned Professor says, "whose (Bihar's) ruler acknowledged allegiance to Bengal, either in loose subjection to or in a state of rivalry with and in independence of Delhi sovereigns from the time of Muhammad-bin-Bakhtyar Khilji down to the time of Sultan Ghiyasuddin Tughluq's invasion of Bengal through Tirhut in 722 A.H. corresponding to 1324

A.D."⁵⁶ This history is equally applicable to Mithila as it is in case of other part of Bihar, parts of which had already come under the direct sway of the Muslims. Traces of independent Hindu kingdom have been found in the Rohtas-area.⁵⁷ It can be said without doubt that during this period the separate existence of Bihar and Bengal had come to be recognised by the rulers of Delhi and they had started to realise that Bihar was a stepping stone to Lakhnauti. Later on the consistent efforts of the rulers of Delhi consummated in the conquest of Bengal during the time of Ghiyasuddin Tughluq, who also destroyed the independent kingdom of Mithila and annexed it to the Delhi Sultanate. With his invasion of Mithila in 1324 A.D. ends the career of independent kingdom of Mithila and begins the history of the Muslim rule. The hide and seek of diplomacy and political wisdom of the rulers of Mithila could no longer save it from the serious onslaught of Ghiyasuddin Tughluq. During this period the expansion of Muslim power in Mithila reached its zenith.

Bihar, and more specially Mithila, once again witnessed the march of imperial forces on their way to Bengal during the reign of Sultan Ghiyasuddin Tughluq, the founder of the Tughluq dynasty. Bahadur Khan, the brother of Hatim Khan had rebelled several times during the reign of his father. Provoked and enraged by his rebellious governor, Sultan Ghiyasuddin Tughluq marched against Bengal in 1324-25 A.D. by way of Bihar. On his return from Bengal, he conquered Mithila then under Harisimhadeva, the last great ruler of the Karnata dynasty of Mithila. To discuss the expansion of the Muslim power in Mithila during this period, we have to depend completely on contemporary literary sources, more specially in absence of epigraphic and numismatic evidence. On account of tradition and literary sources Harisimhadeva had to bear the brunt of several Muslim onslaughts and it was during his reign that the first recorded Muslim invasion of Mithila took place. He is credited with having ruled over the entire portion of Mithila after having totally subdued his enemies.⁵⁸ Devaditya was his minister for war and peace (*sandhivigrahika*).⁵⁹ Vireswara, the best of ministers, after having stormed the enemy fort, excavated a big tank in 'Dahivata', a prominent city and

constructed a very high place over there. He settled the Brahmanas and granted cities like Rampura to the Srotriyas.⁶⁰ A great diplomat and skilled writer, a very successful minister of war and peace, Chandeswara was his son. He is said to have defeated the king of Nepal.⁶¹ From the colophon of a manuscript of the *Viyadaratnakara*, we learn that a "Tulapurusa Mahadana" was performed on the bank of Bagamati in Nepal in Saka 1236 corresponding to 1314 A.D. D.R. Regmi is impatient to undo the existence of this colophon also.⁶² The colophon of the *Danaratnakara*⁶³ emphatically asserts that Chandeswara rescued the earth, submerged in the flood of the Mlechhas, probably refering thereby to the defeat of some Muhammedan general.

Even after giving due discount to all hyperbolic statements used in the above expression, one point is very definite that there had been invasions by Muslims during his reign. This statement is supported by various traditions and at one place Harisimhadeva is credited with a victory against the Sultan.⁶⁴ S.K. Chatterji believes that Harisimhadeva recovered his kingdom after the tide was stemmed, since it was after the repulsion of the Muslims, or after their voluntary retirement, that *Dhurtasamagama* and *Danaratnakara* were composed.⁶⁵ According to K.P. Jayaswal, *Danaratnakara* verse refers to the Bengal Sultan for which credit is given to Ganeswara in his *Sugatisopana*.⁶⁶ But this contention cannot be held valid. The Sultan of Bengal was amicably disposed towards Harisimhadeva as is evident from the account of Mulla Taqia. In this regard there is no element of authenticity in the statement of S.N. Singh⁶⁷ that 'Surtrana' of *Dhurtasamagama* was Ghiyasuddin Tughluq. With the advent of Ghiyasuddin Tughluq on the political horizon, we come on a surer footing of sober history. We have at our disposal different accounts in various sources about the invasion of Mithila in 1324 A.D. by Ghiyasuddin Tughluq. This view has been accepted by almost all eminent scholars of history dealing with this period.

In this connection reference must be made to a rare Persian manuscript, *Basatin-ul-uns*, now preserved in the British Museum.⁶⁸ More important from historical and cultural standpoint *Basatin-ul-uns* is a Hindu tale written in an ornate

prose, copiously interspersed with Arabic and Persian verses by a native of Delhi named Muhammad Sadar Ala Ahmad Hussain Dabir, who was an hereditary servant of the court of Tughluq and secretary to the Royal chancery.⁶⁹ The portion dealing with the expedition of Mithila by the Tughluq is very significant. It is an eye-witness account and hence the authenticity of the work is not to be challenged. The chief merit of the work lies in what one gets in it about Ghiyasuddin Tughluq and his expedition of Tirhut. But Ferishta has given much more than we find in this work where the account is literary rather than factual. Ferishta's account is mainly based upon Isami's *Futuh-us-Salatin*, which he mentions and which was completed seven or eight years before Barni's book. The author of the *Basatin* was in the suite of the Tughluq Sultan in his eastern expedition. He says that the overwhelming heat and hardships which he had to endure on his return journey led to a very prolonged illness and his life was despaired. He was, however, saved by the salubrious climate of his birth place, Delhi, and specially by the remarkable skill of great physician Muhammad Khujandi.

The importance of *Basatin-ul-uns* lies in the fact that it was composed in the first year of Muhammad-bin-Tughluq's reign. It is regarded as an excellent piece of literary work. Some of the extracts given below describe vividly the course of expedition of Mithila. The details of warfare and the chase of the king of Mithila are also very interesting.

Folio 10 of the *MSS* reads that after having conquered Lakhnauti, Sonargaon and the suburbs, Ghiyasuddin Tughluq obtained huge booty in shape of money, elephants, horses and then proceeded towards Mithila with a view to declaring *Kalma* and *Sheriat* in the name of *Allah* with the sole intention of subjugating and taking possession of the vast and far flung and abundantly pleasant realm of Tirhut. The king (Rai) of Mithila had a very strong army and fort. Although the king was not very powerful, yet he was very proud. He had revolted against the previous Sultans and had tried to insult their authority on various occasions. He was not submissive and tried to vain till last to save the independence of Mithila. When the king came to know about the victorious Tughluq lag and

the army, he began to tremble. At this stage the *MSS.* discusses the types of the Tughluq army. The army consisting of elephants started trampling the area and moved so rashly that the Rai (king) had no alternative. His wisdom was foiled and he did not consider it wise to live in his territory and, therefore, decided to leave the same and fled away towards northern hilly-regions.

Folio 11 describes that the king managed to escape with the help of a swift horse. He took shelter in a cave. The Tughluq emperor stayed there in a big town for some days to make necessary arrangement. The fort of Tirhut was surrounded on all sides by water and forests. The Tughluq emperor got killed all those who had taken shelter in the forest and demonstrated, at the same time, immense liberality to those who accepted his authority. He immediately handed over the charge of administration to the people of that area and was, thus, relieved of the anxiety. A city named Tughluqabad-urf-Tirhut was also established to commemorate this event.

Folio 12 shows that after making necessary arrangements the emperor started for Delhi. Here we have to remember that the author was a member of the royal suite and was travelling along with the emperor. He describes most vividly the overwhelming heat, hot wind and various rigours which he had to undergo on account of rough prevailing weather.

S.H. Askari puts the whole thing in the following words: "The Rai of that place, on account of his abundant resources, numerical superiority, strength of his fort, and the power of his personality never took the cap of pride and arrogance off his head and had sharpened the sword of his refractoriness and sedition. He was accustomed to behave perversely....and had never shown an inclination to accept his subjection and offer his submission. But immediately on the receipt of the news of the arrival of the victorious standard, he was so greatly awe-struck at the deed of the triumphant army that tremor arose all over his body like that which happens to the sheet of the tents."⁷⁰

Isami says, "next day the Sultan started from the bank of Kosi towards Tirhut. As soon as the King of Tirhut heard of the approach of Sultan, he took refuge in a forest. The imperial army reached the outskirts of the forest. The Sultan

was very much surprised at the sight of the forest. It is said that he himself got down from the horse and taking an axe in his hand cut down an old tree in order to clear the forest. The soldiers, thereupon, cleared a passage for the army with the help of axes. In two or three days the passage was ready and then the imperial army reached the fort of Tirhut. The fort had around seven deep ditches full of water. For two-three weeks, the Sultan sent his soldiers to the right and left with orders to attack the Hindus wherever they were and to plunder them to bring to subjugation. After this he sent Nasiruddin with royal umbrella to Lakhnauti. The Sultan left the valiant hero Ahmad, son of Tabliqa, in Tirhut and having started from the camp next day reached the capital in one or two months."⁷¹

The above two accounts are very important in so far as the Tughluq conquest of Mithila is concerned. While Barni refers to it, the episode is altogether omitted in the *Tarikh-i-Mubarakasahi* and Nizamuddin simply repeats the statement of Barni. But the accounts of the *Basatin-ul-Uns* and Isami are supported by Ferishta. Isami and Ferishta have much in common in so far as the details of fort and forest are concerned.

Ghiyasuddin Tughluq was the first Delhi ruler who successfully sacked Mithila. He stormed the fort of Tirhut and its Government was left in the hands of Ahmad Khan, son of Malik Tabliqa after the Sultan returned to Delhi. Tirhut became a dependency of Delhi and Muhammad-bin-Tughluq issued coins from the mint named Tughluqpur-urf-Tirhut. Two of his coins issued from this mint, still exist. These coins are unique because they are the living examples of his mad attempts to force the people to use brass coins in place of silver coins for the same value. Again it was during the course of his campaigns against Bengal that Muhammad bin Tughluq annexed Tirhut to the Sultante of Delhi and created serious pressure on it to strengthen his grip. The expansion of Muslim authority in Tirhut down to 1325 A. D. continued and it gave a crushing setback to the Karnata dynasty resulting in its final disintegration. Although the contact with Muslims resulted in multi-dimensional changes in socio-economic spheres of Tirhut, yet the last semblance of independent Hindu kingdom of Mithila finally collapsed.

Notes

1. Cf. R.R. Diwakar *Bihar through the Ages*, p. 380.
2. Cf. *Riyaz*, p. 147.
3. Op. cit. p. 211.
4. Cf. S.H. Askari. *CS*, (1954).
5. Cf. R.K. Choudhury *The Karnatas of Mithila-Annals XXXV*. p. 91 ff. *Harisimhaddeva of Mithila*.
6. *ibid.*, p. 92.
7. Manmohan Chakravarty *JASB*, (1915) p. 407.
8. *CPP*. Tale 4, Article *Vidyapati's Purusapariksa—An important source of India's political History*.
9. *MTV*, p. 115.
10. *CS*, 1964 p. 7.
11. *Riyaz*, pp. 9-10.
12. *SHB*, II pp. 9-10.
13. *ABOI*, XXXVI p. 109.
14. *DHNI*, I p. 374.
15. *SHB*, II p. 29. Cf. *ED*, II p. 319.
16. *SHB*, II pp. 22-23.
17. *ABORI*, XXXV.
18. *CS*, (1954).
19. R.C. Mazumdar *HCIP*, IV pp. 432-33.
20. R.R. Diwakar *Bihar through the Ages* p. 385.
21. *TP*, p. 46.
22. U. Thakur *TM*, p. 398.
23. R.R. Diwakar *Bihar through the Ages* p. 386.
24. *Bihar Inscriptions*. His titles-Ghayas-Al-Islam Wal Muslim in Mughis-al-muluk-wal-Sulatin Abil-Fateh-Tughril-as-Sultan.
25. *SHB* II p. 46.
26. *TM*, (Persian Text) p. 247. Cf. *Riyaz*, (p. 77 ff.)
27. *Mithila*, 9th February, 1953. Cf. R.K. Choudhury *Mithilaka Rajnattik Itihas*.
28. *CS*, p. 10 fn. For correct identification. Cf. *Annals XXXV* p. 110.
29. *ED*, II p. 375.

30. *SHB*, II p. 52.
31. *EIM*, (1903-10) p. 113 Cf. *Monghyr Inscription of Balban*. 677 A.H.
32. *TMS*, p. 30-31: Cf. *TFS*, p. 83.
33. *SHB*, II p. 61.
34. *TM*, pp. 272-73. Contradictory Statement on p. 402.
35. *JASB*, (1915) p. 407.
36. Amir Khusrau, *Quran-us-Saidin*.
37. *Riyaz*, p. 88-9.
38. *ibid*, p. 88-90. Cf. *SB*, p. 48-50.
39. *EIM*, (1817-19) p. 8 ff.
40. *CS*, (1954) p. 9.
41. *BTA*, p. 389.
42. *Annals-XXXVI* p. 163 ff. Edited by R.K. Choudhury.
43. *CHI*, p. 261.
44. *MT*, Cf. *MTV*. He believes that Sakrasimhadeva ruled for 12 years:
45. *CS*, p. 11 (1954). S.H. Askari has expressed natural doubt about the identification of Ismail. But Mulla Taqia has got to be relied upon till fresh and further evidences are forthcoming.
46. Taqia's account is confirmed by Bakshi, Cf. *BMI*, pp. 484-7.
47. For details *BMI*, pp. 486-7. He associates the touchstone tale with Alauddin. Also *BMI*, pp. 495-6.
48. *MTV*, p. 119. Chandeswara in his *Krtyaratnakara* calls Devaditya as 'Hamirdhwantabhanu' and also Mantriratnakara by Alauddin.
49. Cf. *TM*, p. 276.
50. *JOT*, I No. 4.
51. *Mithila*, 9th February, 1958.
52. *Briggs*, I p. 366.
53. *ED*, III p. 543.
54. *BMI*, Makes a mention of Hamir episode but does not make any reference to the invasion of Mithila.
55. *HMT*, p. 79.
56. *CS*, (1954) p. 10.
57. *EI*, XXII p. 222.
58. Chandeswara, *Krtyaratnakara*, Verse 4.
59. *ibid.*, Verse 7.
60. *Krtyaratnakara*. Verse 9-10.

61. Chandeswara, *Krtyaratnakara*, Verse 15.
62. D.R. Regmi, *Medieval Nepal*, Vol. II p. 3.
63. R. Mitra, *Notices*, VI p. 135.
64. *NDC*, p. 66.
65. S.K. Chatterji & Babua Misra *Varnaratnakara*, XVII.
66. Introductory Verse 4. Cf. *Annals* XXXV pp. 115-16.
67. *ST*, p. 67 XXXX. Similar view has been expressed by P. Jha in *MTV*, p. 135, who holds that Harisimbhadeva was taken to Delhi and released later on. There is no doubt that before the recorded Tughluq invasion, some sort of contest took place between the Karnatas and the Muslim kings (identification is not possible in the present state) and that Harisimbhadeva was victorious. The problem of his being taken to Delhi is not supported by all these sources.
68. R.K. Choudhury expresses thanks to Meredith Owen, Assistant Keeper of British Museum and R.S. Sharma of the Patna University. Another copy of the MSS is preserved in the Indian Department of the Leningrad Library and is believed to be an earlier edition than the British Museum....
69. R.R. Diwakar, *Bihar through the Ages*, p. 411.
70. *JBRs*, XLVIII pp. 11-12.
71. R.C. Mazumdar, English Translation in *JBRs* XLVIII p. 3.

Decline of the Karnatas

The reign of Harisimhadeva marks a crucial turning point in the history of Mithila. From the political point of view, his reign was bristling with hectic activities and within a short compass of four decades he played a very significant part in the history of north-eastern India. His achievements both in the fields of political and social history are remarkable. His stormy political career has naturally, left a permanent impression on the history of contemporary eastern India. It has been rightly asserted that the remains at Simaraongarh are enough to make one form an idea of what the Hindus of Mithila achieved prior to the advent of the Muslims.¹ We have hardly any concrete information about the Karnatas after Harisimhadeva and we are not in a position to state categorically the reasons that led to their decline.

The invasion of Tirhut by Ghiyasuddin Tughluq appears to have sounded the death-knell of the Karnatas of Mithila, who ruled for about two hundred and twenty-five years (C. 1097-1324/25 A.D.). It is generally believed that Harisimhadeva went to Nepal, settled over there and his successors ruled over there for about two or three hundred years. This aspect of the history of Nepal has of late been called into question by historians like D.R. Regmi and others. There are definite and concrete

evidences to substantiate that successors of Harisimhadeva like Matisimhadeva and others ruled over Nepal and their sway over the territory was recognised as such by the emperors of China. This important point regarding the history of Nepal has been discussed by Perceival London and Rahul Sankrityayana.² The order of succession after Harisimhadeva in Nepal is as follows: (i) Matisimhadeva, (ii) Saktisimhadeva and (iii) Syamasimhadeva. The Chinese emperor, Hang Wu, sent two emissaries to the Court of Matisimhadeva. The Chinese envoy brought an official seal confirming Matisimhadeva in his kingly-office. In return of this good gesture of the Chinese emperor, the Nepalese King sent to Peking a gift containing a gold-shrine and sacred books. This exchange of mission again took place in 1390 A.D. and 1413 A.D. Syamasimhadeva is also said to have received a seal from the Chinese emperor confirming his accession to the throne. As a matter of fact the successors of Harisimhadeva were regarded as genuine rulers of Nepal by the emperor of China. After the eclipse of Syamasimhadeva from the political horizon of Nepal, the Mallas again established and consolidated their sway over Nepal and this dynasty has been described by the historians as the dynasty of the Karnata-Mallas. The matrimonial alliance between the Karnatas and the Mallas united the two warring dynasties in Nepal.

The Patan inscription of 1413 A.D. informs us that the sons of Jayasthitimalla were partners with the Karnatas at Bhatgaon. Jayasthitimalla, a descendant of Harisimhadeva, married Bijjalladevi and this matrimonial alliance strengthened his position. It is believed that Karnatas, though displaced from their patrimony, fared well in Nepal for a considerable period of time. Jayasthitimalla and his successors claimed their descent from Harisimhadeva and the complete genealogy was transferred to substantiate their claim.³

The fort of Tirhut was stormed by Tughluqs and by the time of Muhammad-bin-Tughluq Tirhut became a part of the Sultanate of Delhi. It became the mint-town of the Tughluqs and came to be known as "Tughluqpur-urf-Tirhut". The Tughluqs had set up one of their administrative centres in the district of Champaran as is evident from the Bediban inscription.

dated 1346 A.D.⁴ Whatever influence the Karnatas might have held in the vicinity of Simaraongarh, it seems that they were totally routed by Muhammad Tughluq and his successors. The fixing up of an administrative headquarters at Bediban was with the sole intention of guarding the frontiers of the Tughluq empire from the onslaughts of the Karnatas who are believed to have shifted to and settled in Nepal. Tughluq officers were appointed throughout Tirhut. Another Tughluq inscription from north-Bihar (Gorakhpur-Saran region) of Feroz Tughluq proves our contention that the Tughluqs had entrenched themselves in Tirhut and other parts of north Bihar. On the basis of the evidences of the Tughluq coins and inscriptions discovered from the regions of north Bihar, it is evident that the Karnatas were thrown out of Mithila though their descendants seem to have continued their struggle for the restoration of their lost power.

The political condition of Mithila after Harisimhadeva seems to have been in a state of hopeless confusion and anarchy. From the introductory verses of *Krtychintamani* it appears that when Harisimhadeva was in heaven he was pleased to see Chandeswara's Yajna and the authors like Jiveswara and others being honoured. The most remarkable point here is this that there is no mention of any living king. The glories described therein seem to be the past history. It may be presumed that after Harisimhadeva's departure, there was chaos in Mithila and his successors continued struggling for supremacy in Tirhut. Vidyapati's *Kirtilata* clearly indicates that there was anarchy in Mithila for sometime in the fourteenth century A.D. Even if we accept the so-called return of Harisimhadeva after the departure of Ghiyasuddin Tughluq, it must be admitted that his transitory success was nothing more than the last flickering of light before its final extinction. The greatness of the Karnatas was now a thing of the past. The Karnatas ceased to exercise any authority over the mainland of Tirhut after Harisimhadeva, though for sometime they appear to have ruled alongwith the Oinwaras upto 1390 A.D. in some obscure corner of Tirhut.

We get two names in the manuscripts, namely Nrisimha and Ramasimha both of whom were beyond any shadow of

doubt, the Karnata rulers of Mithila.⁵ According to Ramdutta Nrisimha was crest-jewel of the Karnatas and was the unquestioned sovereign of Mithila. He should be distinguished from Narasimhadeva who was third in descent from Nanyadeva. Since Ramdutta was the cousin of Chandeswara it is likely that he flourished sometime in the first half of the fourteenth century A.D. K.P. Jayaswal seems to be right in differing from Manmohan Chakravarty that this king Nrisimha should be taken as Nrisimha II and should be regarded as a descendant and local successor of Harisimhadeva.⁶ Harisimhadeva's successors seemed to have ruled over the low lying plains and the Terain area of Tirhut spreading from the borders of Champaran right upto Purnea and they continued struggling at least upto 1930 A.D. R.C. Mazumdar has suggested that Muhammad-bin-Tughluq appointed a scion of the ruling family under the suzerainty of the Sultan of Delhi. Nrisimhadeva or his successor took advantage of the disorder which had set in the empire and tried to throw off the yoke of the Sultanate and hence Feroze Tughluq selected a Hindu ruler of Tirhut from a different family.⁷ R.C. Mazumdar's suggestion regarding the contemporaneity of the Karnata Narasimhadeva following Grierson and others, is, however, untenable and cannot be accepted as such. It is true that the Karnatas did not take the Tughluq occupation of Tirhut lying down and the descendants of Harisimhadeva ruling in Champaran did oppose till they were in a position to do so. This Nrisimha should, therefore, be taken as a local Karnata ruler after Harisimhadeva and in no case before him. It would not be too much to hazard that the Havidih inscription of L.S. 212 possibly belongs to this king,⁸ and not to Narasimhadeva, the third Karnata ruler as has been suggested by some scholars.

In a book known as *Sudhikalpataru*, Ramasimhadeva is said to have been ruling over Mithila on the fourteenth of the bright half of Pausa in Samvat 1446 corresponding to January 1, 1390 A.D. which was a Saturday. On account of this evidence, we may assert that there was a ruler of Mithila named Ramasimhadeva during the later part of the fourteenth century A.D. He must be distinguished from Ramasimhadeva who was fourth in descent from Nanyadeva. From the

colophon it appears that he was a Mahanripati while his namesake mentioned by Dharmaswami is called Punyavaloka Maharajadhiraja Mithiladhipati.⁹ On a critical examination of all these evidences, it appears that this Ramasimhadeva II (Cf. *Sudhikalpataru MSS*) was a local ruling chieftain in some parts of Tirhut and he should be placed after and not before Harisimhadeva. U. Thakur has confused the chronology¹⁰ and S.H. Askari has not cared to discuss the date at all.¹¹ Like Narasimhadeva or Nrisimhadeva II, this Ramasimhadeva has been confused with the earlier one without keeping the dates suggested in the *MSS* in view. The successors of Harisimhadeva succeeded in struggling against the enemies till 1376-78 A.D. and the local chieftains like Nrisimhadeva and Ramasimhadeva ruled within a very limited territory.

The manuscript of *Kantakoddhara* by Madhusudan Thakur (Folio No. 120 A. of Asiatic Society *MSS* No. G. 1439 dated L.S. 491—Copied at Vikrampur in Mithila) and the two fragments thereof at Tanjore¹² (Folios 27 and 131) supply us with an important information regarding the existence of a Karnata ruler in Mithila in the sixteenth century A.D. Madhusudan Thakur wrote this commentary under the patronage of Maharajadhiraja Ramaraja described as Karnata Chakravarti and Bhujabala Bhima. Assuming that the description is hyperbolic, there is nothing to detract us from the fact that Ramaraja was a powerful Karnata king. R.K. Choudhury in his paper—*The Later Karnatas of Mithila* has referred to the existence of an inscription of Ramaraja but it is doubtful if the King mentioned in the so-called inscription was the same as the one mentioned in the manuscript since the inscription under reference has not been published and hence its authenticity is doubtful. There is a reference to another Karnata King Karmasimhadeva in the *Muditakuvalayasva* but his exact identity is shrouded in obscurity. In the fifteenth century A.D., we find that Mithila was ruled over by four different ruling dynasties, i.e.,

- (i) Champaran was ruled by Raja Prithwisimhadeva and his successors like Saktisimhadeva and Madansimhadeva. Madansimhadeva extended his territory upto Gorakhpur and he was the author of *Madanaratnapradipa*.

Levi takes these rulers to be the descendants of Harisimhadeva.

- (ii) Central Mithila was under the direct possession of the Oinwaras who ruled from a village Oini in the district of Muzaffarpur, to at least upto Kandaha in the district of Saharsa wherefrom an inscription of Narasimhadeva Oinwara has been discovered.
- (iii) While the Oinwaras were ruling on the north of the Gandak, the area to the south of the river was subject to the Sultanas of Bengal with headquarters at Hajipur and this particular area was occasionally ravaged by the Muslim rulers from the west. A large number of coins of the Sultans of Bengal have been discovered from the Saharsa—Hajipur region and the recent discovery of a hoard from Kurseon-Nadiami (Darbhanga) confirms our statement in this regard. The hoard has recently been published in the Indian Numismatic Chronicle, Patna, by Hasan Nisat Ansari. The Oinwaras, in spite of their shaky existence, succeeded in maintaining their independence.
- (iv) Lastly, there were the remnants of the Karnatas who were possibly ruling over north-eastern fringe of Mithila extending from the vicinity of Bhaura to the confines of Barantpur in Madhepura subdivision of the district of Saharsa wherefrom an inscription of Sarvasimhadeva has come to light.

Thus, it is evident that after the fall of the Karnatas there began a period of political instability in Mithila and the ambitious powers from the east and west did not fail to fish in the troubled waters. The glory that was Mithila under the Karnatas was now gone for good. Whatever attempts might have been made by the successors of Harisimhadeva for the restoration of Karnata glory, the fact remains that like all other dynasties, the Karnatas seem to have passed out of history after the sixteenth century A.D. if not earlier.

Thus, after a rule of two centuries and a quarter over Mithila and a direct rule of about a century over the Nepal valley, the celebrated Karnata dynasty made its inglorious and tragic exit from the political stage of north India. The rule of

this dynasty, however, left its indelible marks on the sands of time.

Even after the decline of the Karnatas, the ailing ruins and the cursed palaces were the living tales of "five centuries of incessant struggle between Muslim bigotry and Hindu retaliation in north-eastern India."

Notes

1. *JASB* IV p. 121.
2. Perceival London, *Nepal*. Vol. 1 pp. 37-39. Rahul Sankrityayana *Nepal* (Unpublished) Cf. R.K. Choudhury *Bihar and Nepal*, G.D. College Bulletin. No. 4. Also Cf. R.K. Choudhury *History, of Bihar*, p. 111 ff.
3. *HCIP*, Vol. VI p. 418; *JBRs*, Vol. LXVI pp. 16-26. Cf. (*The later Karnatas of Mithila and Nepal*, R.K. Chaudhary).
4. *Current Studies*, 1954 p. 12-13, *N.K. Bhattasali Commemoration Volume*, pp. 199-204 *History of Muslim Rule in Tirhut*, Cf. R.K. Choudhury.
5. *JIH*, Vol. XXXIV p. 323.
6. *RR*, p. 20.
7. *HCIP*, Vol. VI p. 403.
8. *Inscriptions of Bihar*, p. 125.
9. *Weber's Berlin Catalogue*, p. 161.
Nepal Durbar Catalogue p. 23.
10. U. Thakur *TM*, p. 268 ff.
11. *CS*, (1954), *Op. Cit.*
12. *Tanjore Catalogue*, pp. 433-37, Cf. *ST*, p. 147.

Polity and society of Mithila under the Karnatas

ADMINISTRATION

The Karnata period is regarded as a memorable epoch in the history of Mithila. The paucity of source-materials stands in our way while attempting a comprehensive history of the various aspects of the period. With regard to the administrative history of the period under review we experience similar difficulties. There are only two inscriptions of the Karnata period but these incriptions throw, practically no light on the administrative system of the Karnatas. It is Panchobh Copperplate, which having practically no bearing on the Karnatas, gives us an exhaustive list of important administrative officers. For a greater detail of these aspects, we are to solely depend upon the contemporary Smritis and Nibandhas i.e. *Rajniti-Kalpataru* of Laksmidhara Bhatt, *Rajniti-Kamadhenu* of Gopal and numerous *Ratnakaras* (digests) of Chandeswara. These are the main sources for attempting a comprehensive and scientific study of the administrative system of Mithila under the Karnatas.

The different *Ratnakaras* of Chandeswara describe manifold aspects of life during the period under review. It is, more

specially, on the basis of the *Rajniti Ratnakara* of Chandeswara that we can present a brief account of the constitution of Mithila during the rule of the Karnata kings. Details of other aspects of administration also follow when we scrutinise all the aspects of the *Rajniti Ratnakara*. Even various writings of Vidyapati i.e. *Purusapariksa*, *Likhanawali* and *Kirtilata* throw some interesting light on the society and polity of the Karnatas of Mithila. Vidyapati, like Chandeswara, has demonstrated mature judgement and skill in furnishing important details which help us in reconstructing this aspect of the history of Mithila during the period.

Before the advent of the Karnatas, Mithila was an important centre of the Pala-administration. 'Tirabhukti' was one of the 'Jayaskandhavaras' of the Palas. It is not unlikely that the Karnatas also modelled their administrative system on the pattern of the Palas and the Senas, though some changes were brought about in view of the local conditions and circumstances. Nobody in Mithila will deny the contributions of Chandeswara to the development of political ideas and thoughts in Mithila. His *Rajniti Ratnakara* is divided into sixteen chapters and the following have been discussed at length : Kingship, ministers, ministers of religion, lord chief justice, councillors, fort, discussion of policy, treasury, army, commander-in-chief, ambassadors, administration, executive authority, punishment, abdication, appointment of a new king by the minister of religion, and coronation etc. Above mentioned contents of the *Rajniti-Ratnakara* enable us to form an estimate of the administrative system under the Karnatas of Mithila.

Although the *Rajniti Ratnakara* of Chandeswara is a pioneer work to deal with the administrative history of the Karnatas, we also get a glimpse of the administrative system from *Varnana-Ratnakara* of Jyotirishwara. Various aspects of the court-life have been depicted in the *Varnana-Ratnakara*. An extensive list of administrative officers is also preserved therein.

The *Varnana-Ratnakara* deals with a number of problems and enumerates the names of the following officers : Bhupala, Mandalika, Samanta, Senapati, Purapati, Mantri, Purohita, Dharmadhikarna, Sandhivigrahika, Mahamataka, Pratibalta-

Karnadhyaksa, Santikarnika, Rajaguru, Durgapala and many others. The coronation ceremony has been discussed in detail in the *Varnana Ratnakara*. Scholars admit that the list of officers and courtiers which has been found in the *Varnana Ratnakara* is longer than any contemporary list of the same nature. Thus, the *Rajniti Ratnakara* and the *Varnana Ratnakara* supplement each other. A change in this period in the names and terminology is evident and here Chandeswara departs from using old titles such as 'Arthasastra' or 'Dandaniti' and adopts the new term 'Rajniti' or royal polity. The *Rajniti Ratnakara* goes on to suggest a fact that there was a work attributed to Narada dealing with politics. Chandeswara also, very frequently, quotes from a work called *R'ajniti*. K.P. Jayaswal has rightly pointed out, "The *Ratnakara* is thus valuable in the history of political literature and still more important are the norms which obtained at the close of the Hindu and the beginning of the Muhammadan periods..... There is no lack of interest and no total surrender of reason."¹ All these details are there to prove that some glimpses of the administrative, social and economic history of the period are available on the basis of the descriptions available in the *Rajniti Ratnakara* and the *Varnana Ratnakara*. On the basis of these documents a reasonably fact-oriented history of the period under review can be attempted. And hence, the description follows regarding the administration and its different aspects during the Karnata period.

THE KING

The King was at the apex of administration. On the basis of the authority of Manu, Chandeswara has drawn our attention to the aspects dealing with the divinity of the king. The *Rajniti-Ratnakara* (p. 68) declares that the king was an incarnation of God on the earth. The minister of religion had an important say in the constitutional matters. The coronation ceremony of the king was performed according to vedic rites (pp. 70-74). The role of ministers in coronation was very important. Chandeswara propounded the theory that a weak or an old King should abdicate and go in for life of austerity, penance and salvation. The coronation oath, as

suggested by Chandeswara, lays down that the country is God and the king while protecting it will consider it as such. According to him the king is one who protects his subjects (*Rajñiti Ratnakara* p. 2). He defines 'Rajadharma' as signifying "protection and benefaction of subjects." (*Rajñiti Ratnakara* p. 1). Indivisibility of the kingdom was one of the cardinal principles of his polity and we find Chandeswara saying, "Leadership, if divided would destroy the State." (p. 72). According to him the royal property was that which was owned by the whole people (p. 72). Chandeswara was a keen supporter of benevolent monarchy, but king must be just and honest and above public criticism. He should love his subjects in the manner he loves his own self. He should protect his subjects in times of war and peace and should act wisely on critical occasions to save his kingdom. Chandeswara suggests that he should not be efficient in only one aspect of administration, but he must have mastered all the details of it.

As a matter of fact, according to Chandeswara, the king must be well-versed in sixty-four branches of learning. He must be conversant with every detail of administration and should possess the ability to handle any situation, successfully, arising within or without the State.

The daily routine of the king is also very significant from the point of view of his administrative efficiency. The *Rajñiti-Ratnakara* provides a very detailed view regarding his daily activities: "After finishing his daily usual rites, he should go to his palace in the noon. After his food articles are examined by aides, he should take them. After some rest, he should attend to official duties. He should be a 'jitendriya'. He should boldly discourage such things as are likely to make him weak and docile, that is, he should avoid intoxicants, anger and bad habits etc. He should be considerate and well-advised. He should divert his energy to secure the welfare of his people. In accumulating wealth, he should possess the qualities of *Baka* (or duck), in preserving his strength, he should be like a lion, in diplomacy, he should be intelligent like hare and in dealing with his enemy, he should be efficacious like a sheep. He should try his utmost to protect his kingdom by means of fortification. If the kingdom is lost on account of his careless

ness and infatuation for things of transitory value, he is deprived of the help and co-operation of his friends and relations. When he grows old he should call a meeting of all the prominent citizens and in accordance with the seven elements of the State, handover his kingdom to his eldest son. Chandeswara categorically says that a sinful king should not be honoured. At one place he says that in times of need even an undesirable king should not be left in the lurch. He compares his king with a 'Kalpabriksha' and since such a king is endowed with all good qualities he is to be served by the people. He further prescribes certain minimum standards of court etiquette and decorum. The court nobles should watch the movements of their kings."² & ³

The increased royal power is reflected in the assumption of high sounding titles like "Prameswara, Paramabhattarka, Maharajadhiraja, Mahanarapati, Ksitipala, Bhupala, Mithiladhipati, Bhujabalabhima, Bhimaprakrama, Karnatachudamani, Dasamadevātara, Karnatabhumipatimuktamancha, etc." All these titles are evidently based upon the model of the Palas and the Senas. To a great extent, the tradition of the Pala administrative system was maintained during the Karnata period in Mithila. The Karnatas, likewise, developed a huge administrative machinery with various officers of the State, a list of which is available to us from the *Rajaniti Ratnakara* and the *Varnana Ratnakara*. Of course, the form of government was monarchical and the succession to the royal throne seems to have been based strictly on hereditary principles except in the case of Malladeva, who though heir-apparent to Nanyadeva, does not seem to have ascended the throne. This also is applicable to Bhupalasimbadeva and Karmasimbadeva of the Nepal inscription and the *Vamsavali*. Nothing very definite is known about them and also regarding their succession to the throne of Mithila. Under the period, we have no information about the actual position of the Yuvaraja in the Karnata constitutional heirarchy. But the Yuvarajas must have wielded influence and enjoyed great social status.

THE MINISTERS

This class consisted of the Brahmanas and the Kayasthas. Under the rule of the Karnata dynasty the Brahmanas and the Kayasthas were quite important classes and they could not be overlooked by the king. Generations of Brahmana and Kayastha families were closely associated with the Karnata rulers and it appears that hereditary principle was observed in the appointment of ministers. On the basis of the panegyric element in the literary sources, it may be pointed out that there was an evidence of positive truth in it and the Brahmanas exercised a dominant role in the royal court. Without doubt, this was on account of their intellectual qualities and political wisdom which gave them a commanding position in the society and the court. The King always leaned to them for advice and at times guidance for the conduct of administration. The day to-day administration was carried on with the help and advice of the ministers. There were many ministers who had the privilege of serving under the Karnata rulers. *Rajnitī Ratnakara* has devoted a chapter which deals with the qualities of ministers and it also explains their various functions (pp. 10-13). The position of the king was undoubtedly supreme in the State but he had always the benefit of getting the considered opinion and advice of the councillors. Chandeswara has devoted a separate chapter in his *Rajnitī Ratnakara* which explains the method of the appointment of the councillors. The Prime Minister of this period was known as 'Mantri' or 'Mahamattaka'. Both the Andhratharhi and Havidih inscriptions tell us that the term Mantri indicated the Prime Minister.⁴

Sridharadasa is said to have served as the Prime Minister of Nanyadeva and his successor Gangadeva while Rantadeva was another very important minister in the court of Nanyadeva. The family of Sridharadasa had served under the Senas and Karnatas and had been decorated with the title of 'Mahamandalika'. Ramaditya and Karmaditya were ministers under Narasimhadeva while Karmaditya also continued to serve under Ramasimhadeva. Devaditya was a minister under Saktisimhadeva. It has been discussed earlier that the autocratic and arrogant behaviour of Saktisimhadeva annoyed and offended

the nobles and they formed a Council of Seven Elders to serve as a check upon the power of the king.

During the reign of Harisimhadeva, Chandeswara was a veteran politician and man of wide knowledge and experience. He held the post of 'Mahamattaka' and 'Sandhivigrahika' for a fairly long period. It is conjectured that he was the man and brain behind the palace-revolution which took place during the time of Saktisimhadeva. Till Harisimhadeva came of age, Chandeswara wielded great influence. Three generations of his family—Devaditya, his son Vireswara, and Vireswara's son Chandeswara—served as Sandhivigrahika, Saprakrtya Mahavartika Naibandhika, Mahamattaka-Sandhivigrahika respectively under Harisimhadeva. Chandeswara's brother Deveswara was also one of the ministers of Harisimhadeva. These high offices seem to be hereditary for the persons belonging to the Brahmana and Kayastha families. The descendants of Sridhardasa and Ratnadeva continued to serve as ministers till the time of Harisimhadeva. Suryakara Thakura, a descendant of Sridharadasa, who was a minister during the reign of Harisimhadeva, is said to have been the moving force behind the various measures of social reform during the reign of Harisimhadeva. A complete list of the family of Ratnadeva is yet preserved in the Panji maintained by the Kayastha Panjikaras of Mithila.⁵

The ministers wielded enormous powers in the State. They used very high sounding titles as Samanta, Mahasamanta, Maharaja, Mandalika and Mahamatya etc. They were powerful feudal lords and in that capacity they made princely gifts and constructed huge religious structures. Among them notable ministers are Sridharadasa, Karmaditya, Devaditya, Vireswara, Chandeswara and Geneswara. They made lavish gifts and are said to have constructed huge religious buildings. We learn from the *Kriyaratnakara* that Vireswara after having stormed the enemy fort excavated a big tank at Dahivata, a prominent city and constructed a very beautiful and high palace. He got settled many Brahmanas over there and granted Rampura to the Srotriyas. Chandeswara offered 'Tulapurusa-dana' after his resounding victories in Nepal, but D.R. Regmi disputes the authenticity of the statement.⁶ Vireswara was also kind enough to arrange meals for the poor and the

destitute. Apart from displaying their valour in war and peace, they also indulged in writing and compiling of different religious, political and social treatises for which the posterity shall be ever grateful to them.

The reign of Saktisimhadeva witnessed the notorious palace revolution and since then the Council of Seven Elders came into existence. It was installed with a view to avoiding the recurrence of such event in the history of Mithila any more. But the circumstances were in favour of the councillors because when Harisimhadeva ascended the throne, he was a minor and consequently it was left to the council to wield power and authority in the State. From the contemporary literary sources it appears that the importance of Mahasandhivigrahika, Mahamudradhikarta and Mahasarvadhikarta had tremendously increased. The extant meaning of Mudradhikarta is not clear but it may be inferred that it referred, probably, to an officer of the status of Lord Privy Seal. The head of the judiciary came to be addressed as Mahadharmadhyaksa. Vardhamana Upadhyaya is said to have been a Dharmadhyaksa under Gangadeva. During the time of Harisimhadeva, his Prime Minister Chandeswara, held the portfolio of the ministry of peace and war and he also combined in himself the office of the chief-judge or Pradvivaka of Mithila. He seems to have presided over the court of justice as the *Vivada-ratnakara* describes him as a very clever and shrewd judge. His uncle Ganeswara presided over the council of feudatories of Mithila. Since Ganeswara was the head of the feudatory-chiefs of Mithila, he assumed the title of Maharajadhiraja. Besides these ministers, we have vague references to Jateswara as the keeper of the treasury, Hardatta, incharge of the posting and transfer and Laksmidatta as the keeper of the seals. The importance of the idea underlying the transfer of the officers was thoroughly understood by these rulers and in this sphere they were much ahead of Shershah.

The powers and responsibilities of the government were vested in the council which functioned under the supervision of the king. Besides the king and his ministers, there were a number of officers and heads of many departments. The whole territory of Tirhut (Mithila) seems to have been divided into many units for the purpose of strict enforcement of

administrative machinery. There was an apparent decentralization of power but actually speaking it was guided by the whims and caprices of the king and his ministers. Good ministers were like the safety valves of the administration and some of them were held in high esteem on account of this virtue.

THE VILLAGE ADMINISTRATION

For the purpose of administration, the lowest unit, village, was under the supervision of some officers whose main task was the timely collection of revenue. The collection of revenue was done through Gramapati and Dasagramika. The *Rajni Ratnakara* of Chandeswara throws very interesting light on the working of village-administration. We have a reference to a Gulma consisting of three to five villages, Gramapati or Gramadhipati, Dasagramapati, Vimsatimsagramapati and Sahasragramapati and Rastra, consisting of hundred of villages. (*Rajni Ratnakara* p. 60). Every village had an elected headman. The village heads were to be appointed in order of merit and efficiency (*Rajni Ratnakara* p. 60). The whole edifice of administration depended solely on the stability and the integrity of the village administration. Problems pertaining to social, economic, political, religious and legal matters were solved by the villagers themselves and the disposal of the problems was very smooth and speedy.

All types of differences and litigations were referred to the village headman. If he was not in a position to solve the problem, he was duly bound to refer the same to the next higher authority and the similar process was undergone till it reached the highest authority (*Rajni Ratnakara*, p. 60). Thus, the village headman constituted the core of the lowest administrative unit.

The village system was the bedrock of the entire political structure of Mithila and this system continued unabated for centuries to come. All categories of village heads were paid by the King. The nature and amount of payment varied according to their rank and position. The villagers paid their taxes in kind and out of that the payment to headman was arranged.

The mode of payment to different village-heads was as follows :

- (A) Dasesa : Head of ten villages got as much land as he could cultivate with one plough;
- (B) Vimsatisa : Head of twenty villages got as much land as he could cultivate with four ploughs;
- (C) Satesa : Head of hundred villages got one full village.
- (D) Sahasradhipati : Head of a thousand villages was offered a city or a town. (*Rajniti Ratnakara*, p. 61).

The Central government maintained close contact with the village headman through regular correspondence and also through its own officers. There was a separate department in the Central government to look after the village administration. The minister incharge of villages was known as Snigdhas because he was considered to be very closely associated with the King.

Though the actual meaning of the word Snigdha is not very clear, it may be presumed that he was possibly appointed from amongst the members of the royal family. His main task was to look after the various grades of village officers and also to supervise their work. It was his duty to announce to the villages the royal policy and also to bring to the notice of royal court the news concerning the villages. Like his prototype of the Mauryan Period, he acted as a liaison officer between the centre and the village. In so far as his duties are concerned, his office may favourably compare with modern ministry of Local-Self-Government. In the *Rajniti Ratnakara* of Chandeswara, there is a provision for the ministry of rural affairs under the supervision of a minister. Its main purpose must have been to integrate the village administration with central authority and also to look to the needs of the villages (*Rajniti Ratnakara*, p 58). The use of the expression "Tantritaḥ" is indicative of the fact that the minister incharge of rural affairs enjoyed absolute power in his sphere of activity. There was an officer called Sarvarthachintakama in every city or town. In the words of Chandeswara, Sarvarthachintakama was to those village officers as 'Rahu' is to the planets. In view of this vividly clear expression of Chandeswara it is not

possible to agree with the suggestion of U. Thakur that the officer concerned corresponds to "the law-giving authority or justice of the modern time." Actually "his presence struck terror into the heart of wrong doers", but it must be interpreted in a different way.

The Sarvarthachintakama was a powerful welfare officer and was meant for common good to the people of the area. He looked after the performance of such rights and duties which were considered beneficial to all and at the same time which corresponded to the end of State. Dharma, artha, kama and moksa constituted the "sarvartha" of a man as well as a State. All benevolent kings aimed at the attainment of these rare elements. An officer of this type was appointed during the reign of Ramasimhadeva to supervise the observance of social rights. As the office of the "Sarvarthachintakama" was very important, only the persons of tested integrity, character and loyalty were appointed. It is apparent that he was very strict in performance of his duties and people were so scared of him that he has been compared to a horrible planet, Rahu. Each city and village was endowed with an Officer of this cadre. In the *Rajni Ratnakara* (p. 61), he has been described as exercising enormous powers. Undoubtedly, these factors amply demonstrate that the village administration was thoroughly and superbly organized if we analyse them in the context of medieval times. Besides the scheme of village administration as enumerated in the *Rajni Ratnakara*, clearly exhibits that the king used to take keen interest in the efficient running of the village administration.

REVENUE ADMINISTRATION

From the standpoint of revenue administration also, village was the lowest unit. For an efficient administration of the revenue department, the whole kingdom was divided into a number of fiscal areas known as Pargana, Toppa and Grama. A headman or a Chaudhary was appointed in each of these units to collect revenue and the village revenue officer was known as Patwari. So long as they continued to pay revenue regularly, there was absolutely no chance of the people being disturbed. The village accounts were very carefully maintained

and public accounts were kept with complete accuracy. The Patwaris were also known as village accountants.⁸ Their salary was paid out of the village-fund at the fixed rate.⁹ The village police officers were appointed everywhere to enforce the regular collection of revenue which was fixed by the village officials. It was obligatory on the part of the village police to make comprehensive report of the daily affairs of the village to the headman or Chaudhary. The mode of payment is suggestive of the fact that there was much of feudal element in the administrative set up. Although the village headman enjoyed Jagir, yet it would be erroneous to jump at a conclusion that the system may favourably compare with the Mansabdari system of the Great Moghuls as one of acknowledged authorities of the history of Mithila has suggested.¹⁰ During the period under review, we see that the official recognition for the purposes of grant was withdrawn from the lower social groups and was given to the Brahmanas who were land-holders. This provided an economic basis for distribution among the village people. It was the duty of the Brahmana ministers to make land-grants. The question of the occupational basis of the society was no longer there. Needless to say that feudalism was the basis of all social and political organizations of Mithila during the rule of the Karnatas and also in the subsequent periods.

During the period under review, it was landed aristocracy which wielded enormous powers and it was very difficult for the general people to do or achieve anything against them. The Sarvarthacharitakama was like a horrible planet for the people who wanted to upset the statusquo.

The Panchayat system was the model for the village administration. There was no village without Panchayat and 'Panch-Parmeswara' is reminiscent of the old system. The Panchayat managed all local officials, executive and judiciary without any regular interference. It was endowed with its own code of laws. Most of the disputes were locally settled. Mithila had a distinctive local and rural administration consisting of Gulma and Rastra. Rates of payment to village headman differed according to their categories. Usually the villagers enjoyed a life of peace and tranquillity. The village

headman, watchman and revenue officer or Patwari were there in each village. They were responsible for arranging education and sanitation of the area. The village headman acted as both committing and trying magistrate. According to Chandeswara unsettled disputes were referred to higher authorities for final settlement. It is heartening to note that the Panchayats were formed on democratic lines. The system continued for a long time and it was at the advent of the Britishers that the edifice of democratic institution was finally demolished.

It was moral obligation of the personnel of the Panchayat to ensure peace and plenty everywhere. The scope of the Panchayat extended upto secular, moral and religious affairs. Holy scriptures were strictly enforced to safeguard religious rites. There was an officer to supervise the code of conduct of the people. Every aspect of the life of the citizens was under the supervision of the State and as a result of this general prosperity was in evidence.

It has been established beyond doubt that the village and revenue administration acquired immense political significance during the Karnata period. It is further demonstrated by the fact that Chandeswara has mentioned a separate ministry of rural affairs. But during the period under review, the tillers of the soil were virtually rendered powerless and they had no authority over landed property. But overall picture of the society was, by no means, dismal.

DIPLOMACY, DUTA AND PRINCIPLES OF NITI

Our thinkers enunciated the principles of diplomacy and it would not be out of context to add a few words regarding this important aspect. It also goes on to explain the legal position of the feudatories. The fate of the country was undoubtedly linked with the king. A strong king was needed to ensure good government in the kingdom and victories in the battle field. Righteousness was considered to be the very foundation of royalty.¹¹ In agreement with the ancient Indian traditions, Vidyapati has discussed certain fundamental principles about diplomacy and statecraft.

According to him absolute secrecy about affairs of the State was essential, and the exact knowledge of the position of the

enemy was also required. Enemies, slanderers and diseases were natural dealers of disasters and hence be strictly guarded. The king has been further advised to face the adversary with courage and determination and no moment should be wasted in a state of despair and confusion which might prove fatal. Vidyapati pays adequate attention to friendship of a well-born when there is a wave of calamity from all sides. When a weak king is vanquished by a stronger foe, skilled agents should be despatched to sow dissension in other's camp. It has been clearly stated that an alliance with a person not in possession of authority is meaningless. The strength of the king lies in perfect maintenance of all the branches of his army. There should be a fight between kings of equal status. But victory in the battlefield is a very uncertain thing. As suggested by Sukra and Kautilya, diplomacy without bravery was nothing but timidity. Bravery without politics was like the conduct of the beasts. Success generally comes when all these points are joined together and by striking at the vulnerable point of the enemy.¹² Secrecy is the very foundation of diplomatic activities. Chandeswara is in agreement with Vidyapati when he also enumerates these four principles to sack the enemy.

A real diplomat always aims at increasing the number of his friends. The strength of enemy must be known before an offensive is launched. For this purpose, Chandeswara has defined the duties, functions and powers of the Dutas.¹³ It is desirable that the Dutas should always meet the king in private and tell him everything confidentially. The identity of the Duta should not be known to all and sundry. The loyal Dutas must be accorded respect. The feeling of unflinching loyalty to the State should be the main qualification of a Duta. Only highly skilled, shrewd and expert persons should be appointed to this post. A loyal Duta must possess *dakṣa*, *sahadrata*, *drīdhata*, *ksānti*, *kṣeṣa*, *sahisrūta*, *santosa*, *śila* and *utsaha*.¹⁴ If the traditional sources are to be taken into consideration and relied upon, Harisimhadeva of the Karnata dynasty was on friendly terms with Yadava king Ramdeva of Devagiri and he had diplomatic relationship with the king of Gorakhpur also. The Dutas were sent for the purpose of negotiation.¹⁵

There are fundamental principles regarding diplomacy and the Dutas which are well-preserved in the *Prakrtapainpalama*. On the Dutas also depended the success of the kings in internal administration and external relationship.

Hoodwinking the enemy was one of the important aspects of diplomacy. But a wise king must indulge in taking stock of the situation in a very realistic manner. He who does not foresee things ultimately lands himself in troubles and has to repent afterwards. The man who can differentiate between iron and gold is wise. Wisdom does not lie in blocking the course of water or taking away the gift that has been presented. It is an important aspect of Niti to keep one's words. Timely action has a great value (a stitch in time saves nine). Words of a wise man are like engravings on the stone. If a master himself is a wrong-doer, there is no relief. One must be very polished in talks so as not to offend men in conversation. Wealth has a great value and nobody cares for the poor and the down-trodden. Sometimes misfortunes do come and make ones life miserable, but a man with patience and farsightedness welcomes affluence and adversity alike. The Niti as enumerated makes it clear that one must enjoy or suffer the consequences of his own doings as in no case destiny knows any obstruction.

The legal, social, and economic status of the feudatories has been discussed by Chandeswara very thoroughly in his *Rajniti Ratnakara*. He himself played a very important part in the politics of those days and as such he has written every thing based on his personal experience. The course of loyalty of the feudatories continued even after the decline of the Karnata period.

OTHER ADMINISTRATIVE ASPECTS

Under the Council of Ministers, there were many administrative departments. These departments were under the supervision of respective ministers. The origin of the departments can be traced back to the Gupta Age. The minister incharge of war and peace (*sandhivigrahika*) could also issue royal grants. During the period under review, the importance and significance of the office did not undergo a drastic change

and its scope also did not diminish. Chandeswara was himself incharge of this department which was held earlier by his father and grandfather. He was also incharge of the department of justice and acted as the chief judge.¹⁶ Persons of high integrity and calibre were appointed to these high posts. The department of Law and Justice was yet another important office under the direct control of the Pradvivaka.¹⁷ Dharmadhikarana was the equivalent of a judge. The long list of chief judges and judges of the period suggests that preferably only Brahmanas were appointed to the post of a chief judge. In the realm of the administrative history of Mithila, the *Vivadachintamani* of Vachaspati is also very significant. Modern law-courts of the highest nature have accepted the work as of paramount importance. Another book of remarkable nature by Vachaspati is the *Yyavaharachintamani*.¹⁸ The two authors who may be rightly hailed as law-givers in case of Mithila are Chandeswara and Vachaspati. They put forward a set of substantive and exhaustive laws.

It has been rightly admitted that all types of civil disputes arise from greed or ignorance.¹⁹ Punishment is given to check the wrong-doers. If mild punishment does not work, the guilty persons should be severely dealt with.²⁰ There were five types of punishments prevalent during the period.

The first category was of the preceptors, officiating priests, Brahmacharis, kings, children, old persons and lunatics who enjoyed absolute immunity. The Brahmanas were exempted from physical torture, mutilation and death. They also enjoyed certain privileges, they were allowed passage while going, they were given the right to enter other person's house for alms, they were allowed to take fuel, pluck flowers and *kusa* grass from others premises and finally there was nothing against their conduct if they talked to others' wives.

Many traditional titles of cases have been mentioned. There was provision for punishment in case of contempt of court. It was considered to be a grave offence if the subjects were incited. It was obligatory on the part of the judge to be honest, thoughtful, impartial, critical and free from avarice. The feudal system, in this period, had cast its shadow everywhere and many crimes were committed as there was immense dissatisfaction

and heart-burning among the people. Actually, crime is an outcome of definite social conditions and Vardhamana very correctly subscribes to this view. Crime is conditioned by social surroundings, underfeeding and in the sense of despair produced by denial or negation of justice and ultimately in the overweening insolence of social superiority. The *Dandavivek* also confirms this universal truth. Different kinds of punishments were prescribed for other categories of people including technicians, and artisans. Fines were imposed and at times terms of imprisonment was extended for defaulters. Brahmanas were allowed to pay fines in instalments.

Chandeswara in his *Rajniti Ratnakara* has also dwelt upon this aspect and he has explained the elements which a king must possess. His chapter on 'Danda' in *Rajniti-Ratnakara* is excellent from many points of view. He prescribes deterrent punishment to keep the subjects disciplined. It also helps in correcting the irresponsible citizens.

The administration of Law and Justice was highly organized under a separate department of justice. The contention is amply demonstrated by the study of 'Smritis' and vastness of nibandha-literature which bear testimony to justify the existence of an organised legal system in Mithila. These principles of punishment are also accorded approval by the contemporary Muslim theorists. The discharge of royal duties, considering all the points, was an obligatory thing for the king.²¹ No King could be successful if these principles were not ruthlessly enforced. As these principles and policies were having the seal of approval of the *Vedas*, *Smritis* and traditional beliefs, no king could think of incurring the displeasure of the general people. The religious sanctions were also there to help the king in a proper discharge of his duties as the supreme authority in the realm of judiciary.

During the period under review, the department of police was thoroughly organised. The chief of this department was known as "Inspector of others' conduct." The aim of the department was to maintain peace and order throughout the length and the breadth of the kingdom. Ramasimhadeva of the Karnata dynasty is credited with the establishment of the police department in Mithila and the system continued till the

time of the Oinwaras. There was a police officer in every village. The village headman used to get daily report from him. The system of espionage was also there. The duty of the spy was to keep watch on everything and submit a detailed report to the king. On the basis of these information, the king used to inflict severe punishment on the offenders either personally or through a tribunal specially designed for the purpose.

The chief duty of the Kotawala was maintenance of peace in his area. Kotawala, originally, 'Kottpala' is a word of Sanskrit derivation, meaning "guardian or defender of the fort." But as time passed, the nature of the duty changed. During the Karnata period, the routine duties of the department of police were carried on by the Kotawala. His men patrolled the city at night and guarded the thoroughfares. He acted in co-operation with the inhabitants. He took cognizance of every new arrival and departure. Vidyapati's description of Kotawala favourably compares with Muslim accounts. There is enough material to prove that the Kotawala played a very important role in the polity of the period as the towns, cities and villages were filled with thieves, pick-pockets, gamblers, adulterers, outlaws, beggars, mendicants and yogins. Many people of the period lived in want. Crime was the result of the intensity of want and once Feruz Shah Tughluq instructed his Kotawala to bring all unemployed persons to his presence which was immediately complied with.²² The contemporary literature gives us an evidence of the fact that with the accumulation of wealth in the hands of a few, the administrative machinery grew weak, unduly flexible and even the rulers became careless and negligent. The Kotawalas derived benefit and followed the suit.²³ Economic inequality increased the volume of crimes and a big treatise on criminal law was compiled. Even the night watchmen grew slack and the frequent visits and raids of night-rangers increased.

Since feudalism was the main basis of social and political organisation, the status of a man was generally determined by the quantity of land he owned. The system of hereditary army was, therefore, virtually established. Even from the time of Kautilya, we have a reference to this type of army and also in

the writings of subsequent political thinkers.²⁴ Chandeswara also approves of this line of thinking. According to Kane, the maula probably consisted of persons whose ancestors got tax-free lands instead of services of military nature.²⁵ Chandeswara had no love lost for Srenibala because they used to run away from battle field in face of danger. He advises the king not to depose confidence in such troops.²⁶ Getting inspiration from Manu, he gives a good chit to the soldiers from Kuruksetra, Matsya, Surasena and Panchala and places them in the vanguard of the army as they were noted for their bravery.²⁷ Somadeva in his *Yasasatilaka* has given a marvellous description of dress, weapons and habits of the soldiers of Mithila, who were also well-versed in naval warfare.²⁸

There were many aspects of the army. It consisted of many animals to carry the load and at the same time many items for the entertainment of soldiers were also provided.²⁹ Horses of excellent qualities were imported for the army.³⁰ It goes on to prove a relationship with the present middle eastern countries even in the period under review. Chandeswara has furnished the minutest details of army organisation and its position in the battle-field. According to the Hindu belief offence was the best defence and a sword was better than a shield.³¹

The military organisation was under the direct control of the Senapati. He was the leader of his army. All implements of warfare like bows and arrows were inspected by him. It was the duty of the king to bring the enemy under his control by Sandhi, Vighraha, Yana, Asama, Dwaidhibhava and Sansraya keeping in view the protection of the kingdom. If the enemy refuses to come to terms, king should declare war with determination and without hesitation.³² The king, must, by all means examine the pros and cons of the situation before declaring war. Even in the midst of enemy troops, it behoves the king to adopt the tactics of an 'hare'.³³ Hoodwinking of the enemy must be the special recourse adopted by the king in calamity. As the agriculturist weeds out unnecessary grass-roots, so the King must root out opponents from his territory.

War-tactics were also elaborately discussed. The enemy troop should be made to halt at a point so that it might be

effectively attacked. The food and equipment of enemy troops should be destroyed. Enemy forts should be demolished and attacks should be organised at night. Attempts should be made to isolate enemy as far as practicable.³⁴ After victory prayers should be offered to deities and Brahmanas. On such occasions taxes should be remitted, prisoners be released, the desire of ministers, senapati and even enemy should be fulfilled.³⁵

The 'Sandhivigraha' was responsible for the military administration. The department was under the control of the Senapati who had his subordinate officers to look after the four constituents of the army. It is very difficult to say whether there was any separation of military and civil functions; because the sentiment of war and chivalry was prevalent. There are graphic descriptions of battles and many warriors have been praised for demonstrating their valour. An overall survey of the military departments shows that all possible measures were envisaged for safeguarding the kingdom from the apprehended invasions of the enemies.

The treasury has been considered to be an important element of State since its very inception. The king, according to Chandeswara, should keep the treasury full by moral and legal means. No personal consideration should deter him. Treasury, being the life-blood of a State, should be manned by efficient and honest persons. Under the Karnatas, Jateswara was the keeper of the treasury. Mudrahastaka was an important officer associated with it. During the bad-days of the Karnata dynasty some rulers, according to *Rajniiti-Ratnakara*, resorted to illegal means with a view to fill up the treasury. Since the period under review was an abnormal one, it led Chandeswara to explain away Sadabhaga as a merely figurative term and he recommended levying of such taxes as would be found necessary to meet the requirement of the government. He was opposed to oppressive taxation on any pretext.³⁶ K.P. Jayaswal has rightly pointed out that in the *Rajniiti-Ratnakara*, there is no lack of interest and no total surrender of reason.³⁷

The Karnata kings attached due importance to the problem of defence and fortifications. From the very inception of the kingdom, the problem of protection was an important subject

with its rulers. They were surrounded on all sides by foes and consequently they had to be cautious and alert. They had to pay special attention to the construction of forts in different parts of their kingdom. Nanyadeva built a strong fort at Simaraongarh supported by stone pillars. It was further strengthened by later rulers of the dynasty.

When Dharmaswami, a Tibetan traveller, visited Mithila in 1236 A.D. during the reign of Ramasimhadeva, he was greatly impressed by the State of fortifications of that time.³⁸ He has left behind a vivid account of fortifications of Mithila in the following words; "there was a town called Pa-ta which had some six lacs houses and was surrounded by seven walls. The height of these walls was about equal to that of a Tibetan fort. Outside the town walls stood the Raja's palace which had eleven large gates and was surrounded by twenty one ditches filled with water and rows of trees. There were three gates facing each direction, east, west and south and two gates facing north. I did not see the two northern gates; but others had bridges in front of them. In front of the bridges guards were stationed, and there were more than ten archers at each bridge. These protective measures were due to the fear of Turuska." It was also said that there were three men expert in swordmanship.³⁹ This was done as the incursions of the Muslims were frequent. The ruins at Bheet-Bhagwanpur give an indication of its existence. Similarly the Bheet Bhagwanpur fort is attributed to Malladeva. The Mithila tradition believes that Gangadeva constructed a big fort at Andhratharhi which now lies buried deep in that village. This line of thinking has been further confirmed due to the fact that some pieces of stones and some slokas in 'Sardulavikrita' metre bearing the name of Gangadeva have been recovered from that village. The Karnata rulers always maintained a second capital as the second line of defence. While Simaraongarh was the main capital, Gangapur Rajni, Darbhanga, Nanpur, Bheet-Bhagwanpur, Andhratharhi, Havidih, Harisimhapur and Malahad were some important outposts and served as temporary capitals in case of emergency.

Taking into consideration the strategical importance of Sakuri, Sakrasimhadeva founded a fort. Like Gangadeva, Narasimhadeva and Ramasimhadeva also reorganised and fortified their

territories. Ferishta informs that the fort of the king of Mithila was surrounded by seven ditches, full of water and a high wall. It took Tughluq-king three weeks to destroy the fort. The existence of a very strong fort in Mithila is further supported by the author of the *Basatin-ul-Uns*, now preserved in the British and Leningrad Museums. Besides the main fort at Simaraongarh, there were fortifications at other important places which served as temporary capitals. Most of these have been destroyed by the ravages of Kosi, Kamla and Balan.

The *Mithilamahatmyakhanda* of *Brihadvisnupurana* also refers to fortifications.⁴⁰ Jyotirishwara in his *Durgavarnana* gives an elaborate account of the surroundings of a fort.⁴¹ There is a lot of reference to fort, fortifications, Pururaksaka, Purapati, and Durgapala in the *Varnana-Ratnakara* and also *Vidyapati*.⁴² Chandeswara also does not lag behind in this connection. He has categorically emphasised the importance of a Durga.⁴³ According to him, a king should fortify his kingdom and should keep his Kosa within the fortified area. A fort should be constructed at a place which is surrounded by water and grass fields and a king should have palace within the fort.

Chandeswara mentions : (a) Dhanadurga, (b) Mahidurga, (c) Jaladurga, (d) Varksyadurga, (e) Nridurga, (f) Giridurga, and in the midst of all these forts a special fort should be constructed for the purpose of the residence of the king.⁴⁴ These forts must possess space for the domesticated and wild animals as they constitute an important organ of the royal defence scheme.⁴⁵ Food, weapons of warfare, army, and men of letters should be there. Afterwards, there is a concrete suggestion for the construction and maintenance of different types of forts.

The Karnata rulers were constantly in want of reasonably good forts as they were threatened by the enemy attack from all sides. The recent unscientific excavations at Bahera bear testimony to this fact. The Purapatis of the *Varnana-Ratnakara* or the Durgapalas or Durgaraksakas of the *Prakrita-Paingalama* were the officers incharge of the forts and fortifications. In this connection, we learn from *Krtyaratnakara* that Vireswara after having stormed the enemy fort, constructed a very high

palace. Most of the ruins of fortifications have, by now, vanished either on account of the ravages of uncontrolled rivers or levelled down by the agriculturists.

From the study of the history and institutions of the Karnatas, it appears that the scope of the government was all pervading. In this regard, the old tradition of Mithila was strictly adhered to. A study of the Mithila polity reveals to us that feudalism was the basis of political organisation and feudal structure is obvious when we carefully examine the epithets used by the ministers. Though the king was at the apex of administration, the feudatories seem to have enjoyed actual control and the baronial council had a greater say in the administrative spheres. They monopolised all posts of ministerial ranks. They also acted as aide-camp. Jyotirishwara has used the term 'Rajaballabha' and we find that Bhavaditya, a brother of Devaditya served as a 'Rajaballabha'. At times, the effective control of the barons made the king a virtual puppet in their hands. There was no meaning of caste in politics according to Chandeswara. Sovereign might be of any caste but it was his primary duty to protect his subjects according to sacred precepts. To make the hold of barons strong, there was a provision for ministry of religions and the appointment of the king used to be confirmed by the council of ministers. The influence of religion on politics seems to be real.⁴⁸ But there does not seem to be any revolutionary change in the state policy and kings simply followed time honoured conventions. Rules were framed for the guidance of the people in their religious and social observances. We also have the reference to a system of transfer of officers in the early fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, as the barons did not like to fix a particular officer at a place for a long time. Mithila in this respect was a precursor of Sher Shah. There is also a reference to the system of espionage in the *Purusapariksa* and other contemporary works. While going through the contemporary documents dealing with the administrative system of Mithila under the Karnatas we come across a long list of officials and administrative terms as given below :

1. Bhupala—VR. Lord of Earth.

2. Mandalika—VR. Officer Incharge of a Mandala (Panchobh C.P.)
 3. Samanta—VR. & RR. Also in other manuscripts.
 4. Senapati—VR. & RR. *Likhanavali*, & PP.
 5. Purapati—VR. RR. PP.
 6. Mantri—VR. RR. *Dhurtasamagamanataka*
 7. Purohita—VR. RR. PP.
 8. Dharmadhikarna—VR. DV.
 9. Sandhivigrahika—VR. RR. *Likhanavali* & other manuscripts.
 10. Mahamatta—VR. *Likhanavali*. V. (Manned by the Karna Kayasthas of Mithila)
 11. Pratibalakarnadhyaksa.
 12. Santikarniko—VR. & *Likhanavali*
 13. Rajaguru—VR.
 14. Durgapala—VR.
 15. Thakkura—MSS. & *Arthasastra*
 16. Snigdha—RR.
 17. Sarvarthachintakama—RR.
 18. Duta—RR.
 19. Gulma—RR. (It ordinarily means a wood fort and a police station)
- Fleet translated 'Gulmika' as a Superintendent of Wood and Forests. But U.N. Ghoshal takes Gulmika as Collector of Customs duties and refers to Gulmadeya of the '*Arthasastra*' in support of his views.⁴⁷ 'Gulma' has been accepted by Chandeswara to mean a group of three to five villages. It seems that the Gulma indicated a small administrative centre of three to five villages in Mithila during the Karnata period; or might have been the centre of a police station. There is a reference to Gulmapati in the Panchobh copperplate signifying the Officer Commanding a Gulma Squadron.
20. Mahapilupati—Panchobh CP (trainer of elephants)
 21. Mahasadhanika—Panchobh CP (superintendent of army supply)
 22. Mahaksapatalika—Panchobh CP (incharge of records and accounts)
 23. Mahadharmadhikarnika—Panchobh CP (chief justice)

24. Mahakarnadhyaksa—Panchobh CP (Chief of the Secretariat)
25. Vartinaibandhika—Panchobh CP (digest writers)
26. Mahavartikanaibandhika—*Likhanavali*
27. Mahouthithahasana—Panchobh CP (Meaning not yet known)
28. Mahadandanayaka—Panchobh CP & DV and other manuscripts.
29. Mahasamantaranka—Panchobh CP.
30. Khandapala—Panchobh CP.
(U.N. Ghoshal regards it a military official. Other scholars regard it as custom inspector or superintendent of police, or even as the superintendent of municipal arms)
31. Mahavyuhapati—Panchobh CP (chief of military arrays)
32. Mahadhikarika—Panchobh CP (chief superintendent of Offices)
33. Mahamudradhikari—Panchobh CP (keeper of royal seals).
34. Ghattapala—Panchobh CP (keeper of mountain pass)
35. Mundrahastaka—*Likhanavali*.

The establishment of the Karnata kingdom over a vast tract of eastern India necessitated the organization of a sound administration. Though a seat of provincial administration under the Palas, Mithila's traditional administrative structures were suitably amended to suit the new conditions. The Council of Elders, composed of feudal barons, checked the despotism of the king. They enjoyed immense powers. The king carried administration with the advice of the ministers, who as feudal nobles, were also known as Mahamandalika, Mahamatya, Mantri and Sandhivigrahika etc. Chandeswara united in himself the office of the chief justice. Ganeswara presided over the council of feudatory rulers. While Nanyadeva laid the foundation of Karanata administrative system, Gangeya-deva organized it on a sounder footing and Ramasimhaddeva brought within its purview even social and religious matters. Considerable peace and tranquility enabled Mithila to produce scholars of eminence and administrators of skill during the period under review.

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC LIFE

Mithila during the Karnata period was essentially a feudal State, though not completely of the western type. The land-owning class was extremely powerful and the position and status of the king was very exalted. The king alongwith his feudal barons possessed all the means of coercing the people in the society. The land-owners were thriving at the cost of the peasantry.⁴⁸ Sridharadasa in his anthology *Saduktikarnamrita* has enumerated some poems pertaining to this aspect of the life of Mithila during the period under review and has elaborately mentioned the pitiable plight of the people.⁴⁹ D.D. Kosambi also presents a brilliant picture of the people who were forced to live under baronical coercions. In his view they were mostly facing starvation and their progress in social and economic spheres was managed to be brought to a standstill.⁵⁰

The caste system was obtaining throughout Mithila and it helped a great deal by forging a common bond that resulted in the formation of a coherent society. The class structure was maintained by the association of the nobles with the armed retainers. It was universally accepted in those days that everybody should earn his livelihood according to his caste.⁵¹ The advice given by the social reformers to eradicate the extremes of caste-structure was without any avail. From the Buddha to Chaitanya the reformers tried to stimulate and influence the inner feelings through various emotional appeals as *ahimsa* and devotion but failed to deliver goods in so far as the socio-economic life of the people was concerned. Chaitanya did not do anything to remove the caste-barriers. Initially the *Bhakti* movements attracted many people and they were tempted to accept the new faith with zeal and enthusiasm, having broken the chains of intricate social system. But when they realised that even those exponents of new faith did not practice what they preached, they reverted to their original social way of thinking. Mithila during the period under review was the seat of numerous fugitive scholars from all over the country. It emerged as the acknowledged head of all the regions north-east of river Saryu and had the privilege of being the centre of

Sanskrit learning in the east.⁵² The atmosphere and pressure created by other social forces kept an uninterrupted stream of mental curiosity which proved a suitable background for Vidyapati in the later period.

In spite of various books, *nibandhas* and writings, it seems apparent that nothing revolutionary, nothing new and extraordinary in the form of changes, were to be witnessed in the eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth centuries A.D. The element of conservatism and orthodoxy was reigning supreme. No aggression or onslaught by external forces could bring about any change in the peculiar characteristics which were prevalent in Mithila even from before. The society stood like rock and withstood all calamities. But the advent of the fourteenth century A.D. ushered in an important landmark in the history of Mithila. It was very significant as it shook the foundations of the society. The change was the introduction of the institution of *kulinism*. It is not known as to how this system came to Mithila. Mithila-tradition gives credit to Harisimhadeva, the last great ruler of the Karnata dynasty, for the introduction of this institution. The advent of Muslims and their impact necessitated the hardening of the caste rules to an extreme degree. On account of geographical factors also the Maithils had acquired some insular habits. They kept themselves isolated and over-emphasis on the *Smritic* studies enabled them to consolidate their conservative outlook. The sole aim of the social-reorganisation was to conserve the purity and uphold the distinctive marks of culture and consequently new social values came to be established. By insistence on the purity of lineage, it gave prominence to birth, accomplishment and character. Harisimhadeva got compiled and systematised the *Panjis*, the roots of which were already there. The history of *kulinism* in Mithila is yet an unexplored field and it would be better to analyse it in a greater detail.⁵³

The Bargaon Copper plate⁵⁴ edited by D.C. Sircar makes it very clear that the local Brahmas of north Bihar attached great importance to the Brahmanas of Kolancha, one of the most renowned sects of the learned Brahmanas. "Equally interesting is the fact the reverential attitude of the east Indian Brahmanas towards the Brahmanas of Kolancha seems to have

been an important factor in the growth of peculiar social institution known as *kulinism* in north Bihar and Bengal.”⁵⁵ The Bangaon Copper plate is supported by the Panchobh Copper plate⁵⁶ discovered from the heart of Mithila as it also refers to Kolancha Brahmanas. It is believed that a king named Adisura invited a number of Brahmanas who were well-versed in the Vedas. D.C. Sircar is of the opinion that no genuine ruler named Adisura is known from the Bengal sources.⁵⁷ Vachaspati Misra refers to a ruler Adisura who flourished in the middle of the ninth century A.D.⁵⁸ According to D. C. Sircar this Adisura became famous in the legends regarding the settlement of Kolancha-Brahmanas in Bengal and that the institution of *kulinism* was borrowed from north Bihar.⁵⁹

The tradition of the five Brahmanas, invited from the sacred land of Kolancha, is the starting point of *kulinism* in eastern India. In so far as Mithila is concerned, the Brahmanas formed a category by themselves. When the Brahmanas were possibly annoyed at the predominance of the Buddhists in Mithila, they migrated to Purnea and Assam. The Vaidika-Sampradayikas were the earliest Brahmana-settlers of Assam and they were said to have migrated from Mithila. They still follow the *Smritic* rules of Mithila-school in preference to Bengal-school. The traditional accounts maintain that the king of Tripura brought five Vaidika-Brahmanas from Mithila to assist him in the performance of a yajna.⁶⁰

The Brahmanas of Mithila kept alive the orthodox tradition of castes and prided themselves on their purity and claimed to be free from the Buddhistic influence. They looked upon the people of Magadha as impure and when some of the Magadhan social practices and customs crept in, it seems that Adisura, who is said to be ruling somewhere in Mithila, invited Brahmanas from Kolancha and made rigorous rules for the protection of Brahmanism. Except in case of sacred pilgrimage across the Ganga, fresh initiation was considered necessary. After having established the institution of *kulinism*, Adisura granted lands to the Brahmanas who came from Kolancha or were related to them. The institution of *kulinism* can be traced back to Adisura. The full credit of systematising it goes

to the Karnata rulers of Mithila and also to the Senas in Bengal.

Varnasrama-dharma was the order of the day. The fluidity of the early period ultimately gave way to crystallization during the period under review. In spite of repeated warnings and successive movements against the rigidity of caste-system and priest-craft the system had come to stay. Jainism, Buddhism, and Vaisnavism originated and developed, but were finally over-powered by the evils of this system. The rise and development of this anachronism in the Maithil society may be traced back to economic inequalities and has persisted through ages. Not only Mithila but Bengal, Assam and Orissa have also their own system of *kulinism* and these States were socially and culturally integrated for a greater period in the middle ages. The system of *Panjis* exists in all these States even today. The Brahmanas in Mithila were already grouped according to *gotra* and *pravara* and after the system was organized on a sound footing by Adisura, the skeleton genealogy came to be maintained. The earliest *Panjis* go back to the time of Nanyadeva. Ballala Sena of Bengal and Hairsimhadeva of Mithila are credited with having organized the system scientifically.⁶¹ Hairsimhadeva settled the respective ranks of three sections of Mithila sub-castes of the Brahmanas and prescribed marriage rules for them.⁶² His sole intention was to regulate and encourage religious observancy among the people of his land and also to maintain the purity of blood by avoiding the forbidden degress of relationship and marriages in strict conformity with the *Sastric* injunctions. The Brahmanas were split up into four sub-castes : (a) the *Srotriyas* i.e. Brahmanas who performed the Agnihotra sacrifices and who devoted their time from dawn to dusk in religious worship. They were given the first place in order of *kulinism* (b) the *Yogyas* were next to *Srotriyas* who were placed in the second category; (c) the *Panjibaddhas* were next to *Yogyas* and were placed in the third category; (d) and next to *Panjibaddhas* were the *Jaibaras* who constituted the fourth category.⁶³

Birth, accomplishments and character were the only factors which decided the issue of social status. The society judged the position of Maithil Brahmanas on the basis of approved

professions prescribed for them. Since the last great Karnata ruler Harisimhadeva reorganised the society, he is credited with having laid the foundation of Maithili *kulinism* with the help of his minister Suryakara Thakur known as Lekhi. The institution of *kulinism*, though said to be very ancient, is generally ascribed to the Senas of Bengal and the Karnata rulers of Mithila, and flourished before Islam found a firm base in these parts of eastern India. The Brahmanas of Mithila are credited with having kept alive orthodox traditions of caste. Even during the pre-Moghul India they were not directly under the Muslim rule but had their own Rajas and chiefs, many of whom were Brahmanas. Medieval Maithili society was remarkably free from the Buddhistic influence. Possibly the Brahmanas of Mithila deliberately attempted to weed out some of the social practices which had crept in during the prevalence of Buddhism in Magadha and elsewhere. Buddhism was normally forbidden to a Maithil. The Brahmana-legislators composed various glosses on the *Smritis* containing elaborate rules regarding daily duties.

The institution of *kulinism* gave rise to a new class of *Panjikaras*, i.e. the marriage contractors. They were authorized to issue certificates to the effect that the marriage contracting parties were not within the forbidden boundary of consanguinity. As such the Panjikaras became very important in the social life of Mithila as they were charged with the task of preserving the purity of blood. They maintained complete and exhaustive genealogical records. Like the Brahmanas, the Kayasthas (mainly the Karna Kayasthas) were classified into two main divisions, viz., Bhalamanusa or Kulina and Grihastha i. e. of ordinary birth. The Kayastha Panjikaras had the same rights and duties as that of the Brahmana Panjikaras. Other castes like the Ksatriyas and the Vaisyas are also believed to have adopted the system of the *Panjis* but in course of time, they appear to have neglected it and consequently their *Panjis* are not up-to-date and scientific. Risley noticed the existence of such *Panjis* among the Vaisya in Rahariya in the district of Saharsa even in the nineteenth century A.D. The Maithil-Brahmanas and Karna Kayasthas still cling to this system and

no function or ceremony can be celebrated unless these technicalities are gone through.

Whatever might have been the intentions of the promulgators of these social reforms in those days, its effect on the Maithil society was disastrous. It created class within a class and helped the growth of mutual jealousies and animosities in the social life. It gave rise to the development of a system known as *Bikauas* and the marriage relationship degenerated into monetary relationship. The emergence of the worst type of polygamy was the result of this system and sometimes a man married as many as forty to fifty wives. It further led to the deterioration in the position of women. They were subjected to numerous mental and physical tortures. Even the daughters came to be sold for money. The exaggerated importance of being born in a high *Kula* helped the growth of a system in which women came to be treated almost as a commodity and were sold and purchased according to one's own whims and caprices. This was done on the excuse of the so-called preservation of the purity of blood. The system struck at the very root of the social organisations and the growing hatred of one section against the other led to gross demoralisation of the society. It also gave impetus to child-marriage which proved to be a great curse in course of time and widowhood became almost universal throughout Mithila. Sudras and women were almost in the same category and their condition was no better than the slaves. Women were treated as an object of luxury, pleasure and sexual gratification.

The idea of maintaining the pristine purity of their race against the Muslim onslaught lay at the root of organising the society on a firm foundation. This, of course, constituted an important landmark in the social history of Mithila. New standard of social values came to be instituted. For tightening the social system, the Brahmanas and law-givers wrote various *Smritis* relating to the social practices of varna, food, dress, marriage, inheritance, purificatory rites, etc. Relations between caste and social groups came to be governed by the rules of endogamy. Taking of cooked food from outside caste-groups was interdicted. Pursuit of hereditary profession was insisted upon. Different classes were discouraged from living together.

There are numerous instances to justify the existence of bad women or prostitutes during the period under review. Some Brahmanas and Ksatriyas took delight in keeping concubines. Even the people of lower strata were also in habit of visiting the prostitutes. The writers of the period are also credited with having frequented the pleasure houses. Both Jyotirishwara and Vidyapati have given description of prostitutes and women of bad character in their writings. On account of the inroads of the Muslim and their consequent grip on the political situation of Mithila, they became a threat to the honour and prestige of Hindu ladies. Good looking girls of marriageable age were not allowed to step out of door without *purdah*. Henceforward the *Purdah*-system became prevalent in the Maithili society.

We learn from Jyotirishwara and other contemporary sources that in Mithila the distribution of property was unequal. In various literary texts and commentaries of the period also we have innumerable reference to the pitiable lot of common people. There are instances of beggars and mendicants moving in the city. A large ratio of the Sudras constituted this class. Beggars and their visit to the city reminds us of the Gupta period. On account of intensity of wants, beggars at times indulged in stealing and pilfering which became a problem for the local chaudhary or headman in course of time. Proliferation of castes and various social groups had become a reality during our period and we come across a large number of social groups and functionaries in the *Varnana-Ratnakara*.

Agriculture was the mainstay of the people. Fine quality of rice was produced in Mithila. Sugarcane was also cultivated on a large scale. Dharmaswami found sugarcane and indigo as popular products and carried away loads of sugar and dyes from Bihar. Boats and fishermen were very common in Mithila and we learn from Dharmaswami that one boat could accommodate as many as three hundred passengers. Regular contact with China, Tirhut, Nepal and countries of south-east Asia facilitated religious and cultural contacts and contributed to an increase in foreign-trade.

The rural economy was almost self-sufficient and stereotyped. In Mithila, agriculture was the occupation of the Vaisyas

and members of the lower orders. There are instances to substantiate that even the Brahmanas had taken to agriculture. The *Varnana-Ratnakara* gives us a good account of the articles of daily use in Mithila and specially mentions *Chura*, *farhi*, *dahi* etc. Mithila was famous for its milk and curd preparations. Important fruits like mango, pomegranate, fig, lemon, melon, and banana, are also mentioned in contemporary literature. Sugar was an important item of export. Honey was used in the temples. The betel-leaf industry was highly developed in Mithila and *Pana* was a hot favourite of the people belonging to Mithila. Both Dharmaswami and the *Varnana-Ratnakara* refer to it. The *Varnana-Ratnakara* further refers to about thirty varieties of cloth and articles of different metals. Palanquin was a common means of conveyance. There are thirty-six kinds of weapons and armours mentioned in the *Varnana-Ratnakara*.

The craft guilds and professional castes continued to function in the villages and idea of the occupation of Mithila during the period can be had from the *Varnana-Ratnakara* where the author gives a list of the lower castes and depressed classes. They were degraded people in the society and represented in most cases labour of a hereditary character. The implements and methods of work were definitely crude. The social status of village craftsmen discouraged them from making progress beyond certain limits. Tradition of guilds and crafts tended to create a rigid exclusiveness, while technical secrets sometimes died with the worker and were thus, lost to posterity. Trade was flourishing and we learn from the *Varnana-Ratnakara* that Mithila imported clothes from Tanjore, Sylhet, Ajmer, Kanchi, Kamarupa and Bengal. The *Varnana-Ratnakara* describes the ideal merchant as one who is familiar with different people belonging to distant places.

The standard of economic life in the village was not very high. The lot of a peasant was not very happy though he had to work hard. The rich lived in affluence while the poor classes had to lead a very miserable life. Amir Khusrau observed, "Every pearl in the royal crown is but the crystallised drop of blood fallen from the tearful eyes of the poor peasant." The palaces abounded in beautiful damsels, surrounded

unded by thousands of maids and slave girls, while the streets were littered with hoards of starved beggars. There was luxury with all its evils. In his *Dhurtasamagamanataka* Jyotirishwara gives us a description of the house of a prosperous farmer. But prosperous farmers were not many in number.

In spite of the development of the various crafts and guilds, the *Varnasrama* system held the field. The social distinctions were in vogue. The Karnatas helped the consolidation of the system. The poor people were honest and hard-working. But we have a long list of criminal classes also. Women enjoyed less privileges. In respect of their person and property, they enjoyed few legal rights and privileges. Married women sometimes helped their husbands to earn money by means of spinning, weaving or some other art. Rice, fish, meat, fruits, milk etc. constituted the chief diet. In villages, the people were simple. Land was the main source of revenue. It was normally granted for pious purposes. The system of slavery was not unknown. Early marriage was in practice and *Purdah* system had come to stay. The practice of *Sati* was also prevalent in certain classes. But it was not very common. It increased after the advent of the Muslims in Mithila.

EDUCATION AND CULTURE

O'Malley has rightly asserted, "The history of Mithila centres round the court engrossed in luxurious enjoyment of literature and learning." It seems that political stability and comparative peace and tranquillity in the kingdom gave rise to spread of learning and scholarship. The social and economic conditions also provided a firm ground for the emergence of a band of scholars and authors of eminence. *Vedanta*, *Nyaya*, *Mimamsa* and *Sankhya* system had their beginnings in the fertile soil of Mithila. It remained the centre of Brahminical civilization and a great champion of orthodox and conservative thinking. Mithila led to the development of *Nyaya* and *Purvamimamsa* and for centuries it was a great seat of learning where students flocked from different parts of the country for satisfying their intellectual curiosity. It also provided shelter to scholars who were compelled by the circumstances to leave Nalanda and

Vikramasila. It was mainly on account of Muslim invasion. As a matter of fact, Mithila being completely free from foreign invasions was in a position to give protection to large number of scholars and authors from the adjoining territories. According to D.C. Sen, the civilization of Bengal came from Mithila when Magadha ceased to give light to the eastern world. This comment presupposes a high standard of civilization in Mithila during the period under review.

The Karnatas have left their impression on the education and culture. Books and commentaries on almost all branches of literature were written and compiled during this period. Important commentaries on the old *Smritis* were either written or compiled. Padmanabha Datta started his new school of grammar known as *Supadma*. Bhanudatta Misra wrote on Rhetorics and Erotics. Ratneswara commented upon *Saraswatikanthavarana* and Jyotirishwara wrote *Panchasayaka* and *Rangasekhara* besides his famous *Varnana Ratnakara* and *Dhurtasamagamanataka*. Bhavadatta's commentary on the *Naisadhiyacharitam* is yet studied with interest and delight. Prithvidhara Acharya's commentary on the drama *Mri:hhakatika* is a superb example of his deep knowledge and scholarship. Srikara Acharya's commentary on the *Amarakosa* is a remarkable contribution to Sanskrit literature.

Chandeswara and his family kept the banner of Smritic studies high. Sridatta Upadhyaya, Harinatha Upadhyaya, Indrapati, Bhavasarmān and others contributed much towards the development of Smritic branch of literature. Sridharadasa's *Saduktikarnamrta* is an important Sanskrit anthology of this period. The Karnata period saw the growth and development of a new school of logic known as *Navya-nyaya* (neo-logic). *Navya-nyaya* is an amalgam of *Nyaya* and *Vaisesika* and this system became more and more prominent under the Karnatas and as a result of this Mithila became an important centre in the world of philosophy. Their theology was developed as we find in Udayanacharya's *Kusumanjali*. Mithila was the centre of orthodox views and as a result of that various works in Sanskrit on different branches of learning were produced. The Brahmanas of Kanauj, Magadha and Gauda took shelter in Tirhut where

the peaceful atmosphere made it possible for them to pursue their literary activities.

The period is equally remarkable for the growth of Maithili language and literature. It emerged from Maithili apabhramsa, though the direct influence of Sanskrit is clearly perceptible. Maithili language during this period progressed in form and elasticity. The best illustration of the earliest Maithili prose is the *Varnana-Ratnakara* of Jyotirishwara Thakur. It shows that the language had really come into its own and was capable of expressing five shades of thoughts and feelings with the aid of simple forms. The work, besides being the earliest prose in any northern Indian language, is a source of literary pleasure. It demonstrates in ample measure the literary talents of its author. His *Dhurtasamagamanataka* contains some earliest Maithili songs whereas the *Parijataharananataka* of Umapati has twentyone good Maithili songs. The *Prakritapainglama* contains a large number of verses in early Maithili and some of them are instances of popular lyric poetry. A few verses give us a picture of the life of the country-people. The spoken language had come to be used in general literature and the folk-poetry existed in abundance. The tradition of *Lorika* song in Maithili is an example of that type of folk literature. Maithili in that sense is one of the earliest developed neo Indo-Aryan languages. Maithili had its own script and Dharmaswami refers to the existence of *Vaivartalipi*, which has been identified by A. S. Altekar with the then Maithili script. The writings of Daka and Ghagha belong to one of the earliest stages of Maithili. Although their language has undergone various changes from age to age, the fact remains that these anonymous authors composed their agricultural *sutras* in the language of the people of Mithila and helped the growth of the language of the area in more ways than one. Maithili reached its apex in the age of Vidyapati. A host of scholars kept up and illumined the literary activities of Mithila and this period is marked out from the previous periods by the gradual diffusion of Sanskritic knowledge by the first serious attempt in developing the vernacular literature.⁵⁶ The conquest of Nepal by the Karnatas gave impetus to the growing cultural relationship between Mithila and Nepal. A large number of manuscripts discovered in Nepal are written

by Maithil scribes who had settled down in Nepal. Their writings are gratefully acknowledged by the posterity for connecting the scattered tales of the Karnatas of Mithila and also to elicit other information.

In matter of religion, the people of Mithila were extremely conservative in which the priestly aristocracy played a dominant role. Elaborate treatises on religious rites and gifts were written and compiled. *Siva*, *Sakti* and *Visnu* were very popular in Mithila. *Tantra* had also its impact on the life of the people. Every aspect of life and culture of the people of Mithila was dominated by the tantric influence. The matrikapuja and the worship of mother Goddess in various forms and also worship of nature are the salient features of the religious life of Mithila during the period under review. The impact of *Bhagvata*, *Harivamsa* and the *Brahmavaivartapurana* proves the great influence exercised by the Vaisnava-thinking. *Siva* and *Sakti* were the predominant devotional mainsprings of the Maithil-mind. Various religious sects are mentioned in the *Varnana Ratnakara*. *Buddhism* was not popular in Mithila and Dharmaswami bears testimony to this fact. The Brahmanas treated Buddhists as their enemies though the Karnata King, Ramasimhadava, appears to have been a liberal ruler as he offered the office of the chief priest to the Tibetan Buddhist Dharmaswami. There was a multiplicity of gods and goddesses in the scheme of the religious life of Mithila. Jyotirishwara has described the existence of *Natha* cults. These cults were very popular and that is also attested by the frequent references to them in Persian and Hindi writings of the period.

Art was practised with great enthusiasm. Art, architecture, painting, music and other fine-arts developed during this period. In the absence of systematic archaeological excavations and explorations, we have very few specimen of art during this period but we can present a study even on the basis of what we have been able to achieve quite recently in this sphere. Nanyadeva was a great patron of art and letters. He was a prominent writer on music. He was the author of *Saraswati Hrdyalankara*. Various new *ragas* and *jatis* were introduced by

him. He has treated at length one hundred and sixty *ragas*. The tradition was maintained by his successors and we are informed by Vidyapati that Harisimhadeva was a great patron of art and music. The development of music enriched Mithila and its literature in the field of early lyric poetry.

The Karnata kings constructed temples, dug tanks and also erected great structures, most of which have by now been washed away by floods. According to Spooner there was a separate type of temple architecture known as the "Tirhut Type."² The various old temples at different places in the districts of Champaran, Muzaffarpur, Darbhanga and Saharsa illustrate the different processes of the development of this important style. The ruins at Simaraongarh speak of the huge constructions and the beauty of its fort has been described by Dharmaswami. The sculptural brilliance of these ruins shows the magnificence of the old structures and patterns. The remains of the palace with superstructures are extremely beautiful and remind us of the glory that was Mithila under the Karnatas.³ Figures symbolising gods and goddesses are seen on the walls of the temples in Andhratharhi and Bheet-Bhagwanpur (Darbhanga). Different types of ornamented and big stones with different motifs and reliefs have come to light in various parts of Mithila. From the artistic point of view, the few finds of Bheet-Bhagwanpur are very significant and give us an idea of the progress made in Mithila in this field.

W.G. Archer has rightly drawn our attention to the wall paintings of Mithila. The Kayasthas occasionally painted on papers on auspicious occasions like marriage, *upanayana* and other ceremonies. Even pots, fans and earthen dishes were painted. Some of these paintings indicate sensuality. This art of painting has been carried on since time immemorial. It is done by the ladies and is linked with the domestic and ritual traditions. These paintings depict *Durga*, *Kali*, *Rama*, *Sita*, *Radha*, *Krishna* and other deities and a good number of animals, fish, bamboo, etc. The bamboo tree and the ring of lotuses represent the diagram of sexual organs.⁴ According to Archer, rhythm, the most important quality in Kayastha painting, is casual and accidental in Brahmana paintings.

Mithila was the centre from which radiated the light of the art of music and dancing in different directions in Bihar. The *Varnana-Ratnakara* describes various kinds of dancing, the ten qualities of the drum players, twelve kinds of drum music, the tune beats (*talas*), the ten *rasas*, thirty *bhavas* (acting) and twenty varieties of *vinas* and different kinds of *mridangas*. Maithil musicians were respected at various courts outside Mithila. They enriched the musical traditions of Nepal and Bengal. Maithil-musicians were invited to the court of Tripura also.

The Karnatas raised Mithila to a prominent position in the history of north-eastern India and they maintained cultural relation with the neighbouring kingdoms. They left no stone unturned to foster religion and culture in Mithila and elsewhere. This made Mithila an important centre of learning. The Karnatas did their best to raise the moral and cultural standards of the people. Rules were framed for the guidance of the Hindus in their religious and social observances and an officer was appointed to adjudicate upon all questions arising out of the working of these new canons. Various temples were constructed and wells and ponds were dug at the cost of the State. State grants were given to the educational institutions and Brahmanas were always honoured and respected at the court. Art and architecture received state patronage and if we believe the findings of the Maheswara inscription, a strong fort was erected by Firuz Aitigin in the vicinity of Tirhut. Black stone was in use under the Karnatas. The Bheet-Bhagwanpur ruins and the Andhratharhi image are the best specimen of the Karnata sculpture. A set of two representations of men and women in embrace is on the door-frame at Bheet-Bhagwanpur and they are finely carved out. The religious themes are endowed in the worldly consciousness and the iconic representations are vivid and we find its counterpart in the writings of Vidyapati. P.V. Kane has rightly observed, "from the days of *Yajnavalkyasmriti* down to modern times, the land of Mithila has produced writers whose names are illustrious." From the above study of the history and culture of Mithila under the Karnatas, it appears that the

period was really one of the best that Mithila ever enjoyed in her long and chequered history.

Notes

1. K.P. Jayaswal : *Introduction to Rajniti Ratnakara*, p. 29.
2. Cf. K.P. Jayaswal, *Rajniti Ratnakara*, (pp. 46, 51, 54, 60 & 98).
3. R.K. Chaudhary, *Mithila in the Age of Vidyapati*, p. 46.
4. *CIB*, pp 124-25.
5. Cf. R.K. Chaudhary, *Mithilaka Rajnaitika Itihasa*.
6. D.R. Regmi, *Medieval Nepal*, p. 273.
7. U. Thakur, *TM*, p. 354.
8. *ST*, p. 62.
9. *ibid.*, p. 62.
10. U. Thakur, *TM*, p. 353.
11. *PP*, (G) Tale 29, pp. 6-38.
12. Cf. *Commentary on Raghuvamsama*, XI p. 55.
13. K.P. Jayaswal, *Introduction to RR*, pp. 42-43.
14. *ibid.*, p. 47.
15. Pathak (*PP*), pp. 15, 27.
16. Cf. Mitra, *Notice*, VI p. 66.
17. Cf. *Manu*; VIII pp. 9. IX, pp. 234, *Yaj*, p. 11. *Katyayana*, p. 67. *Suka*, IV pp. 5, 14.
18. Edited by Ludo Rocher
19. *DV*, p. 32.
20. *ibid.*
21. *PIHC*, VI, pp. 236-37. Among the important duties of a king were (i) to establish towns, bridges and frontier walls, (ii) to establish safety of the roads and (iii) to remove wants of saints and beggars.
22. *Aff*, *TFS*, pp. 334-36.
23. *MM*.
24. *AS*, IX p. 2.

25. *HDC*, III p. 200.
26. *RR*, p. 35.
27. *ibid.*, 35.
28. Cf. Hadiqui, *Yasasatilaka and Indian Culture*, p. 60.
29. *BTA*, p. 406.
30. *VR*, p. 30 Cf. Song No. 71 of Umapati's *Parijataharananataka*.
31. R.C. Chakravarti, *Art of War in Ancient India*, p. 195.
32. *Rajaniti Ratnakara*, p. 59.
33. *ibid.*, p. 60.
34. *ibid.*, p. 38.
35. *ibid.*, p. 38.
36. *ibid.*, p. 55.
37. *ibid.*, p. 29.
38. G. Roerich, *Biography of Dharmaswami*.
39. *ibid.*, p. 58.
40. *Mithilamahatmaya*, pp. 70-75; Cf. R.K. Chaudhary, *Mithila as gleaned through Mithila Mahatmya*.
41. *VR*, pp. 66-67.
42. *PP*, (Pathak) p. 25, 31, 49, 50, 51, 95, and 211.
43. *RR*, p. 24.
44. *ibid.*, p. 25.
45. *ibid.*, p. 26.
46. *ibid.*, pp. 70-74.
47. U.N. Ghoshal, *Hindu Revenue System*, p. 292.
48. Cf. Jack Lindsay, *Byzantium in Europe*, pp. 453-54. Cf. R.S. Sharma, *Indian Feudalism*.
49. *Saduktikarnamrita*, Verses 48-53, p. 309.
50. *HOS XLIII* p. 42, *Subhasitaratna*.
51. Cf. *Visnupura*, pp. 230-244.
52. Cf. K P. Jayaswal, *Mithila*, MSS Vol. I, Introduction, p. 8.
53. Cf. Thakur, TM., p. 278.
54. *EI* pp. 52-54.
55. *ibid.*, pp. 52-54.
56. Cf. R.K. Chaudhary, *Select Inscriptions of Bihar*.
57. D.C. Sircar, *op. cit.*
58. Vachaspati Mishra, *Nvayakarita* p. 250.

59. D.C. Sircar, *op. cit.*, Cf. *PIHRC* 1942. Cf. Risley, *People of India*. p. 215. Cf. N.N. Basu, *Social History of Kamarupa*.
60. Cf. R.K. Chaudhary, *A Critical evaluation of Nidhantapur Copper Plates*, *PHIC*, XXII p. 493 ff.
61. Cf. *MDI*, p. 64, *MTV*, pp. 136-43, *MDJ*, p. 148, N.N. Basu *op. cit.* II pp. 162-63. Hutton, *Caste in India*.
62. Indian Caste Customs, p. 54; Cf. Wilson. Indian Caste p. 206. Cf. Risley, *Castes and Tribes of Bengal*.
63. Cf. *Ghatakrai*, p. 17.
64. *JASB*, 1915, p. 432.
65. *JBORS*, II p. 121.
66. *JASB*, IV pp. 122-23.
67. *Marga*, Vol. III No. 3 p. 25 ff.

Epilogue

Books come to an end but not the challenge of the problem underlying them. Mithila, with her rich socio-cultural heritage and eventful history, continues to baffle the scholar and historian. Its ancient culture did not perish on account of the onslaughts of the Muslims. The Muslim rule started persecution, temples were razed to ground and brahmanas were put to death, but Muslims were reasonably tolerant, and at all times Hindu chiefs continued to rule in outlying parts of the country, paying tributes to their Muslim overlords. Conversions to Islam were numerous, and in some regions the Hindus were compelled to embrace Islam. The mutual influence was inevitable. This aspect of history in Mithila yet remains to be scientifically studied and analysed. If it is a certainty that this contact was largely responsible for preparing a suitable background in which Vidyapati, Chaitanya, Kabir and Guru Nanak later on flourished on national scale. Much that was useless in ancient Indian tradition and culture has been perished. In fact, although the whole face of India is undergoing a rapid change, the cultural tradition of Mithila continues, and it will never be lost. The present study does not pretend to provide a definitive portrait of the Karnatas. It is, at best, a comparatively more penetrating and comprehensive document on the subject. It is gratifying to note that Mithila is under the microscope of scholars representing various disciplines. This convergence of multi-disciplinary scholarship is bound to yield rich fruits in course of time. There is much that enkindles hope and bids fair to remove the cobweb of vagueness from an important segment of Mithila's history. Of course, there is little on record by way of solid achievement that may be given

the credit for blazing a new trail. But mention may be made of some of the recent attempts. Chandeswara has been subjected to threadbare analysis by political scientists recently. Vidyapati's songs are now being analysed not only for the aesthetic joy exuded by them but also for their intrinsic worth as rich and varied source material for reconstructing history. The revised edition of Upendra Thakur's *History of Mithila* gives a more comprehensive coverage to the Karnatas but it sheds no fresh light on chronology. The problem of establishing the chronology is not new. But it has acquired an added dimension today following serious doubts raised by some western scholars. Chronology has been one of my central concerns while shaping this book and I have treaded very carefully and cautiously.

While cherishing the hope that soon the researchers will be in a position to illumine the dark pockets of this fertile field of reserarb, I think in all humility that my book is a step in that direction. In my systematic attempt to write the comprehensive history of a dynasty which flourished from A.D. 1097 to 1325, to trace the various courses of Muslim expansion in this region and to explore the political, social, economic and cultural significance of the period I shall feel amply rewarded to merely serve as a bridge between the foggy terrain of the ancient and medieval times and the present-day brightening path of authenticity and definiteness. Meanwhile, let us wait and watch how the historian of today and tomorrow applies himself to the task of disentangling the remaining knots of a complex but rewarding problem.

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